デスマーチからはじまる異世界狂想曲

5

Hasubono Iokishoki
Serious soshite
Harem

愛七 Illustration ひろ

9-1. To the Town of Magic Hunters

Satou's here. My workaholic father had been returning from work late at night, and going to work early in the morning since I was a child, maybe that's why I don't remember meeting him much. Although, I never thought that I would be in the same position before I got married.

◇

It's been awhile since our last wagon journey. We always rode on the wagon when we were in the duchy capital, but the duchy capital main street with its neatly prepared soil is quite different than the undeveloped narrow road at the back country. Since the branch of the great river runs along the main road, there are only a few carriages that are running here. Most are transported by small boats on the branch river.

"Gatagoto~" "Gotogoto nanodesu!"
<TLN: Japanese onomatopoeia for rattle.>

Pochi and Tama are looking awfully excited ever since we've gone out of the town. They've been pulling and shaking my sleeves on both sides by matching the shaking of the wagon, so it's hard to read book in the menu.

"Mou~, just what do you girls find so fun."
"Don't you know nodesu?"
"Arisa is still green~"
"She's no good nanodesu~"
"Mukka~ So cheeky even though you're just Pochi and Tama~"

Arisa is saying something like some kind of kid boss in the block, but she seems to say it for the sake of saying it and doesn't mean to offend.
Seeing Lulu who's been giggling while facing the road on the coachman's seat since awhile ago, it looks like she knows the reason.

"Lulu, don't laugh, tell me if you know it."
"You~can't, since it's a 『Quiz』, you can't ask the answer from other people."

Arisa is growling, "Gununu", such unladylike groan from Lulu's reply. Since Lulu's used the lines that Arisa usually says to everyone, she probably can't rebut it.

However, I also don't know, I guess I'll ask for a hint.

"I'm sorry, Pochi and Tama. I also don't know though?"
"Gaan.""Na, nanodesuu."

Tama, please stop speaking sound effects out loud. I pat the head of the two, who look like puppies that have been betrayed by their master, as if to gloss over it. I wonder, am I the bad one here?

"Monopoly of master~""It's nice to be together nodesu."
"I see."

Come to think of it, when we were in the duchy capital, especially the latter half, we hadn't been together beside during the meal and sleep. Since, during the latter half, I was like an overworking father who came home late after everyone had gone to the bed, let's pamper them a bit now.

"Satou."

Mia who was scouting with Liza, and Nana, together with the hornless beast comes back. She jumps from the hornless beast toward the wagon, so I receive her and put her down on the wagon. Even though she's gained a bit of fat, she's still quite light. Looks like she'll be fine even without going through dietary restriction like Arisa.

"Master, a fallen tree is blocking the road up ahead."
"Master, the way the tree has fallen looks unnatural. It feels like it's been artificially made."

<TLN: It's impossible to tl but Nana's always used "Masuta" to call Satou while all other members uses "Goshujin-sama". They both mean "Master" in English.>

The fallen tree is probably the handiwork of thieves to stop carriages. Since I found the thieves on top of the low hill a bit apart from the highway when Liza and the others went scouting, I've already dealt with them with [Remote Stun]. Magic is convenient after all.

"Pochi, Tama, change into your work clothes. Let's remove the fallen tree."
"Roger~""Hear hear~ nanodesu."

I told Liza that I would remove the fallen tree with magic, but since she wanted to use the tree as a training by likening it to a monster, it was refused. This is just right to check the performance of everyone's magic swords. If they can't properly hold back when they're going against thieves, they will surely kill the opponents.

"Master, I wish for charging nodesu."
"You can't~"
"Tama is right. If you don't charge it with your own mana, it won't be a training."

I somehow evaded Pochi's request attack that came with upturned eyes while she was presenting her short magic sword. It might have been dangerous if Tama didn't support.

No one can use magic edge like Liza, but Tama and Nana are able to charge mana without problem. However, Pochi is the only one who's having a hard time with it. According to Arisa's investigation, it's not only because she's short on MP, but she also needs to instantly operates large amount of mana, so it's not going well for her. Although, there aren't any difference between mana of Tama and Pochi.

"Yay, it's done nodesu!"

Pochi who is finally able to put mana into the short magic sword turns to me and puts out "Praise me" aura, so I praise her, "You've done well", while patting her head. Her tail looks like it'll break.

"First turn, Nana will go. 『Shell』."

Nana freely displays the raised physical strength from the physical reinforcement nature magic by wielding a shield that's larger than her body and a one-handed sword.

Although the sizes of the magic swords of Nana, Pochi, and Tama are different, I've put the same magic circuit on them.
After filling it with mana, once you recite the password (Command), the magic circuit carved on the sword will activate. 『Shell』 generates cylindrical mana field around the axis of the magic sword.
It's a magic circuit that's normally put into shields or armors, but you can use the sword as a blunt weapon with it, and it's also useful when you fight against monsters with acid or putrid bodily fluids, so I try to experiment with it.

At first I made a magic sword carved with a magic circuit that could generate fire, but it seemed that the heat from the fire is too bad for the material, when I tried to use it, the sword broke. I put the plan on the back burner until I get some material that's stronger against heat. Since it'll burn your hand when you hold the sword after using it for a long time, I also have to find insulating material it seems.

It's a plain magic circuit, but it's probably ideal for dealing with thieves that we've been going through a lot this time.
With just a single strike from Nana, a fallen tree the size of three of my waists is snapped right in half until the inside.

"Second turn, Tama's going~"
"Third turn, Pochi nanodesu!"

Tama is wielding two short swords now due to the influence of the martial art

tournament. She's keeping her balance nicely to the point that you won't think that she doesn't have dual wielding skill. Pochi keeps the same style as before with a one-handed short sword, and a shield.

Tama utilizes the weights of the two magic short swords, no, she's skilfully utilizing the inertia from her assaults, striking the fallen trees as if dancing. Each of her strike is only about 20-30% as strong as Nana's, but since she's hitting a lot, she cuts the thin fallen tree and branches in succession.

Pochi simply wields the short sword, and charges ahead. She's powered up with the heavy blow skill properly. Yet, it's only about 80% as strong as Nana, I wonder if it's because of her physique, or her weapon.

"Fourth turn, 『Magic Edge』 『Heavy Blow』."

Liza attacks in a low posture while leaving red trails of light. The reason why she doesn't use Thrusting skill is probably because striking damage is more important than piercing for this.
However, spears have too high of piercing power after all, she only leaves a big hole on the fallen tree, unlike Nana and the others who've smashed the tree.

I should make an attachment for Liza's spear for when she's fighting an enemy with piercing resistance.

With Mia's Baloon magic and Arisa's Repulsion magic, the fallen tree that's been torn into pieces are removed from the road.

Since the thieves had recovered during the meantime, I made them sleep once again with [Remote Stun]. I've already collected their weapons with Magic Hand. There isn't anything noteworthy, so I'll melt them to become raw material.

◇

"Do you guys have some business in the village?"
"No, we don't plan to stop by in particular. It looks like some things have been burned, did some thieves attack?"

When we were passing near a farm village, we got challenged by some armed farmers. This farmer looks to have some burn injuries, but the farmers behind him seem to only have some kind of scar injuries. In addition, their weapons are all crudely made, you can even call it improvised. Things like wooden spears with only the tips shaved, or spears with smashed obsidian stones attached on the tips.

There are hatred and fear on the eyes of the farmers.

"I, it was someone even worse than thieves. It was a noble."

The young man announced as if vomiting. I feel some glance from a far away house. We should get away from here as soon as I've gathered some information.

"Was it a noble from around here?"
"No, I had never seen him before. He asked if we were hiding beastmen, when we told him that we didn't know, he burned our houses with magic, and threatened us to confess."

A fire magic-user noble who's searching for beastmen.
I'm terribly reminded of someone. It's the foreign noble who had tried to buy the white tigerkin princess in the dark auction. Since I don't remember his name, I search for him by limiting to only around up to the neighbor town from here. Looks like he's staying on the town of Puta that we're heading to. Let's mark him at least. It'll be troublesome if he mistakenly attacks Tama.

"That's unfortunate. We also have to be careful as to not get involved. These are thanks for the information, please accept it."

I take out three lower-ranked potions from the accessory case in the wagon,

and pass it to the young man. Since he looked doubtful, I told him that they were cheap magic medicines (potions), and then the wagon departed before he could say something.

"You're quite generous eh~"
"They were just dummy that I've made for the wagon, they were really cheap stuffs you know. One is worth one copper coin at most."
"Chea~p."

They're leftovers from when I was mass producing military-use magic potions, from the alchemy book I had bought in the dark auction. They came out when raw materials weren't enough, or after I omitted some step. The lower-ranked potions from earlier are about the same as lower ranked magic potions I usually make that are 20 times more diluted. Nevertheless, they're not inferior to lower-ranked potion that's on the market. However, since you can make the dilution without magic cores, it's quicker and easier to make the potion normally considering the trouble.
Since the [Diluted Lower-Ranked Potion] that are made from this method has a weak effect, I can freely give it to people, it's convenient.

◇

And then, three days after we depart from the riverside town of the great river, we can finally see the town of Puta at last. This town is congregated by people called magic hunters that are working by hunting monsters to collect their magic cores. Even though the job sounds strong, most of them are not higher than level 10. In this duchy capital, there are several towns where magic hunters are gathering like in this Puta town.

I've learned the circumstance of things around here from Tarina-san of the scroll workshop. She was complaining when the magic cores that had arrived from Puta town were small and had low purities.

Around the forest near this Puta town, there are eight nests with about 100

demi-goblins each, they're separated for 10 kilometers apart from each other. Small nests with about dozen of demi-goblins also exist here and there. They're probably controllably hunted so that they won't become too many, or die out.

Humans don't seem to be the only one who hunt demi-goblins, various snake, lizard or frog monsters are loitering around near the nests.

Even now, there seem to be several magic hunter parties that are hunting the demi goblins, loitering around in the forest. One of those parties seems to have just been returning to Puta town, and from what we can see from here, they're having some kind of trouble.

Good grief, there's a lot of troubles in this world.

9-2. At the Town of Magic Hunters

Satou's here. I often did part-time jobs during my school days, but I rarely ever had money problem. I might have been lucky for having avoided the incomprehensible wage structure during internship.

◇

There are a group of five people having heated arguments in front of the gate.

"That's why I said we should've asked for an advance payment since we wouldn't be able to pay the tax for entering the city."
"Why should we have to do something so annoying."
"That's right~, who was the useless one who begged to take him with us while saying that he would be useful."
"Getting tired right after he began carrying the luggage, and drinking all the water himself."
"The worst part is how he wrongly cut the fur on the corpse of the Crimson Fox we had defeated after much trouble."

The four women dismissed the protest of the boy who only has one arm while sneering at him.
If we're in a tale, this is the scene where we go help the boy, but I wonder why. I can't help but think what the women have said are justified.

I wonder if the boy who's being a drag is also desperate, he's still persisting. He's not discouraged~

"Then, by the evening of this day, come to the purchasing counter in the bar. When you come, we'll give you one sixth of the reward, that are three copper coins as promised in the beginning."
"Hey wait, I've defeated four goblins myself haven't I. You forgot four copper coins as the commission y'know."
"You~, you just killed goblins that were already dying from our attacks from

the side right?"
"How could you even demand rewards for that. You're really shameless."
"I still did defeat them!"

While looking down on the persistent boy, the tall girl who's the leader shrugs her shoulders, and proposes a compromise.

"Okay, okay. However, those four goblins weren't defeated by you alone, half. I'll give you half the rewards, two copper coins. Come to the bar by the evening."

Ridiculing the boy who looks relieved, the surrounding women are smiling badly.

"Hehe, if you don't come quick, the money will all turn into alcohol y'know."
"Al~right, let's bet for whether we have finished drinking before the boy comes or not."
"Nice~, I put one big copper coin for before."
"I'm betting five copper coins for before."
"Gyahahaha, there won't be any bet the~n."

Looks like they will really drink it all if he takes too much time.
The boy seems to have the same opinion, as he begins to negotiate with the gatekeeper in a hurry.

◇

"You've heard our talk earlier right? If you let us enter now, we'll pay the fee later properly."
"Humph, I'm not fit to be a gatekeeper if I believe what you magic hunter bunch say. How about hunting beasts that you can use as a payment in kind before the evening?"
"There's no way we can catch beast without trap or tools."
"Then, give it up."

Ho, so you can use payment in kind, I didn't know.
The gatekeeper who has noticed our wagon coming closer drives the boy the side. The boy was going to rush toward the town during that chance, but another gatekeeper toppled his feet, and kept him on the ground.

"Hey, welcome to Puta town. I've never seen you before, are you a merchant?"
"No, we only want to stop by during our trip."

I show the gatekeeper my silver plate ID.

"This is, excuse me. You were a noble."
"Excuse me noble-sama, you've said that you're on a trip, but this is Puta the farthest town. Where in the world are you going? Don't tell me you're going to the nest of the Wyverns beyond the mountain to take their eggs?"
"Oy, Gatts."

When I check on the map since I'm interested with the gatekeepers' words, there are certainly Wyverns in the mountain along the way. Wyvern's egg must be big I think.

"I do want to cross the mountain, but I didn't know about the Wyverns. Taking the egg you say, is it delicious?"
"It mite' be mighty delicious, but they sell handsomely. The rumor says that you can exchange them for gold coins, weight-for-weight, if you bring them to the royal capital, or the Silga kingdom on the other side of the mountain."
"Although I've never seen the real thing, but they turn it into the Wyvern steed for the dragoons."

If the egg's weight is 500 grams, then it'll be around 150 gold coins huh. Silga kingdom seems to be a neighboring small kingdom beyond the mountain range to the east. By the way, the Bornean forest that we're heading to is over the mountain range to the southeast.

"Hey, noble-sama!"

"Shut up you."

The gatekeeper quickly silents the boy, who have talked to me, with the tip of the spear he's holding on his hand. I think he doesn't need to go that far.

"It's fine. What is it, boy."

The first half is for the gatekeeper, and the latter half is for the boy who's still being trampled.

"Noble-sama, I need it for entering the town. Lend me two copper coins!　I will return it without fail."
"At least use polite speech!"
"I don't know such thing like polite speech. Isn't it polite speech already if I just use 『Sama』."

However, if he borrows two copper coins from me, he'll be left with three copper coins even if he pay it back with no interest, is he alright with that?

"Okay, I'll lend you some."
"You sure!?"
"Chevalier-sama, this guy is a magic hunter y'know? They're bunches who can't keep money overnight. You absolutely won't get your money back."
"Don't say unnecessary things after he's agreed. I'll absolutely return it!"

I give two copper coins to the boy who's slipped out of the gatekeeper's foot. I wonder if he hasn't taken a bath for a long time, he smells chokingly bad. No, this is, there's probably smell of goblins' blood, and cut meat mixed in.

The boy receives the money from me with his only arm, and gives it to the gatekeeper like he's throwing it.

"That's right, noble-sama! If you haven't decided on your inn, go to that gate inn you can see from here. It's really expensive, but it's famous for their delicious food."

After telling me so, the boy goes to the main street while buzzing his arm.
Now then, what should I do with this tepid gaze from the gatekeeper.

"Chevalier-sama, I think being a good person is a virtue, but there are a lot of people who only indulge on those virtues without feeling thankful in the world, y'know?"
"Oy, leave it. Chevalier-sama is troubled."
"No, I appreciate the concern."

Looks like he's concerned for real, so I thank him. For the time being, seems there's no problem in entering the city.
When Lulu is going to depart the wagon, the gatekeeper looks like he's remembered something and warns me.

"There's an insane foreign noble staying in the place of baronet Poton, the governor here, so it's better for you not to get close there."

When I check on the place of the governor--if I'm not mistaken, it's a town consul that functions like a magistrate--baronet Poton, there's the aforementioned fire magician near him.

The fire magician is called Dwot Dasles. It looks like he's a marquis of a kingdom called Makiwa. Since the kingdom's name doesn't appear in the traveler's journal, I don't know where it is. I think it's probably among the group of small countries near Rumooku kingdom or Silga kingdom if it has something to do with the tigerkins.

With [Arson], and [Murder] that he has on his Rewards and Punishments, how could they let him into the town.

◇

This Puta town is quite small, unlike the towns we've been to up until now. It's only one kilometer wide at most. The city is roughly divided into four

blocks around the small mansion where the governor is. The west block where we are now, the north block where the harbor is, the east block with the pleasure quarter, and the south block where the workers quarter and the slum are located. Looks like each block has a residential area.
The races are composed of 70% humans, and then ratkins, sea lionkin, and rabbitkin form the 20% with the same ratio each. There are other races beside them, but the number is low. The slaves are around 10% from various races, but the human slaves are relatively numerous.
It looks like the only nobles in this town are the house of baronet Poton and marquis Dasles.

I should be visiting him as a noble, but there's no need to deliberately get myself into trouble. When I check on the nobility correlation chart that I've bought from Toruma's house, it seems he's among the lowest seat of nobility from the house of marquis Lloyd, so not visiting him probably isn't going to become that big of a problem.

Nevertheless, this correlation chart is convenient. Let's make some toys for Mayuna-chan as thanks next time.

When the wagon has entered the inn's courtyard, a girl who seems to be the helper comes running. I leave the wagon to Lulu and the others, and go into the inn with the girl leading. I only take Arisa and Nana along.

The innkeeper who's waiting inside changes his expression into one that looks like he's found a source of income when he sees me. This is strange, I don't think I'm wearing expensive-looking clothes today.

"Welcome young master, I have just the right room for you."

He leads us to the room while rubbing his hands on his big hairy arms. The room is on the third floor of a different wooden building, you can even pay more to hire guards during the night. If we stay for more than five days, the guards will be free. The inn charges one silver coin for one night. Compared to the gate inn on Seryuu city which charges one big copper coin for a night, this is probably cheap in comparison.

There's a bathroom in this building, but there's only a bathtub which only fits one person, and of course there's no hot water facility either. You can boil water, but it'll take time, so they ask for us to do it anytime beside during meals if possible. Looks like you can draw water from any channel beside from the drinking water reservoir, but aren't those shared with the drainage? Well, I can just use [Pure Water] on it before I draw the water.

The innkeeper advises us to bring our luggage to the warehouse in the building since thieves often come in midnight. There's nothing inside the luggage, but to not draw unnecessary attentions, I bring them all into the inn.

"Yo, is this the place where the noble-sama is staying?"

A hunter man who looks like a boss of thieves enters the inn courtyard while bringing a big baggage on his shoulder. There are dismantled deer meat inside the cloth.

"Hou, Goku. You've brought a big game."
"Yeah, it's been awhile since the last one. Is the young master over there the noble-sama? How bout it, they're just at the right time for eating. There's no entrails since I've eaten them on the day of the hunt though."

Gahahaha, the man laughs, apparently this hunter is selling the deer. The price is two silver coins, half of the duchy capital's. To inform the market price like this suddenly, this man sure is poor at doing business. I feel that he knows about the information (about Satou) too fast, but he probably heard it from the gatekeeper.

Since there is no kitchen in the separate building, I leave the cooking to the inn chef.

Since there's still some time before dinner, I take Pochi and Tama, who are full of vigors, on a stroll. Just in case, Pochi and Tama are equipped with thin mantles with hoods, leather armors, and wooden swords, just like they've been in the duchy capital. I'm wearing simple clothes that are a white shirt, and trousers.

With these very plain appearances, I probably won't get entangled with some strange guy.

9-3. At the Town of Magic Hunters (2)

Satou's here. I remember the time when I got a burn during my visit to my grandfather's house in the countryside, it wasn't cured with over-the-counter drug, but by applying ripped aloe that had grown on the garden to the burn. It was a folk's remedy, but I remember that it worked well. I wonder if there's aloe in another world.

◇

"Where are we going~?""Nodesu?"
"We're going to the harbor. Looks like they're selling many rare fruits there, so we're going on a sightseeing."

I reply to Pochi and Tama who have just asked about it when we're walking on the street while holding hands.
It's about 10 minutes walk from the inn to the harbor. According to the innkeeper, it's not a market, but just several stalls and food carts that are selling food and drink for laborers and sailors, so I'm just going to take a look.
Mia and the others seemed to be interested too, but since she looked like she was planning something with Arisa, I left them in the inn. Liza was also going to follow as a bodyguard, but since the security looked bad, I asked her to guard Lulu and the others. Nana was particularly fine with either, but since it was dangerous, I left her. There are a lot of sea lion children in the harbor we're going now.

There are a lot of one-story houses with good ventilations in this town, maybe it's due to the fact that the temperature is like everlasting spring here. Every house is built about 30 centimeters high above the ground, although not to the point of being a high-floor type houses. The roads are bare soil, and weeds are growing on the berm. There seem to be some vacant lots here and there too.

Overall, the people walking in the town are wearing thin clothes with short skirts. As expected, women older than 20s are wearing longer skirts, yet their ankles can still be seen. A lot of girls that are minors wear short ones above the knee. I couldn't care less about the men, but many are wearing nothing on the upper half, or bold open-neck shirts. There are a lot of children of around upper grade elementary school ages wearing shirts that display their bellybuttons on full. Apparently, it's not because of fashion, but because they're wearing old clothes that don't fit their bodies anymore. However, I think these make it feels like we're in a southern country. Many children who are below that age are wearing baggy shirts, but the rest are naked. At least, they're wearing loincloths, but they're running around in barefoot energetically.

Tama suddenly parts her hand and runs to the berm, apparently she's picked some grasses on the roadside and come back.

"Found ninigi grass~"

Ninigi grass is a medicinal herb for treating fevers. They can only be used in compounding since they have weak poison if used as is, you need to compound them in order to make them into potion. Therefore, most people don't recognize them as medicinal plants. Their poison only cause upset stomach, so they can also be used as laxative if diluted.

However, Tama does a good job remembering them even though we've only ever found them for 2-3 times during our journey.
I receive the medicinal plants from Tama, and put it in the bag into the Storage. While praising Tama, I search for [Ninigi Grass] in one kilometer radius. Apparently, the medicinal plants are growing commonly like grasses in the vicinity of this town. It's not a medicine that I use much, but I guess I'll secure some as a supply.

In the vacant land along the way, the ninigi grasses like earlier are growing en masse, so I ask Pochi and Tama to gather them. I search again just in case, and besides the mugwort-like plants that can be used to stop bleeding, there's no other usable plants. Besides having red veins on its leaves, the mugwort-

like plants look just like normal mugworts. Of course I've warned the two to not pluck the mugwort-like plants. The local people here probably use them as common medicinal herbs.

After seeing Pochi and Tama, children from the neighborhood also begin to gather the ninigi grass and put them on the mat that I've put on the ground beside me. I wonder if they think this as some kind of play?
When half of the ninigi grasses growing in this lot have been collected, I announce that it's over, and give little something to the children. One penny for each. I feel that it's too cheap, but from the story of the aunties during the food distribution on the duchy capital, looks like it's enough. In fact, the children receive the money delightfully.

"Yo, Nii-chan, what are you trying to do making the children gather poisonous plants. Are you going to serve it to the damned lord?"
"They can be used as laxatives indeed, but they will turn into fever medicines if you compound them."

His words make him sounds like a hooligan, but it doesn't seem like he's trying to pick a fight. He's really just interested it seems.
This human young man seems to be a laborer. He's tanned with bulging muscles. However, since he's only level 4, Pochi and Tama are probably stronger.

"So you're really a pharmacist! Please, I'll pay the cost no matter what it takes, can you give me some medicine for burn?"

Burn huh....
I have a bad hunch, so I ask for the detail, and it's just as I've expected. The stupid noble from before came to them to ask about the white tiger princess, and threw several fire bolts toward the houses of beastmen, burning many of them to the ground. At that time, the big sister of this young man tried to save the beastmen children and got seriously injured by the large fire.

I ask the young man if the guards of this town do anything to him, but since the stupid noble is under the protection of the governor of this town, baronet

Poton, they don't throw him into the jail. After the day the stupid noble started to be confined in the house of Poton, the servants of Poton house began to search for the whereabout of the white tiger princess. However, they're not getting any clue, and the servants' actions have become violent.

Of course there won't be clue. They (white tigerkin) are heading toward the royal capital after all.
The white tiger-kun party probably pretended to flee here to spread false information. I think it's quite effective, but it's troublesome.

"Nee-san, I've brought a pharmacist."

She only replies with a whimper. From the information on the map, she's a 22 years old, and should be single. No, her single status doesn't matter. Yep.

I ask Pochi and Tama to wait near the entrance in the room, and go to the interior room after the young man.

This is awful.
The burn is not spread, but it goes from her right hand to half of her face. The young man sends his nephew and niece to the room with Pochi and Tama to empty the space for me. Is she perhaps a single mother? No, it's nothing.

She can be easily healed with just one diluted medicine, but to do it without leaving a wound seems like it'll be difficult.
I guess I'll observe the effect in exchange for the medicine. I make the woman drink a magic potion with normal concentration without the boost from mana healing and titles. Since one bottle heals for 300 HP, it can heal the woman even if she's in critical conditions 10 times.

The young man beside me is holding his breath.
Yup, I understand that feeling. No matter how many times I see it, the swift effect of this magic potion feels unpleasant. New pink skin is already forming on the muscle tissues that can be seen.
Just in case, I make the woman eat things with high calories, and sleeping medicine that I've made for treating serious injury. She should be completely

recovered by morning with this.

The young man thanks me to the point as if he's going to kiss my shoes, and as the reward for the treatment, I ask him to lead me to the place where that stupid noble has gone wild.

Three-story tenement? But, it's been burnt down. Several people are lying on the mats that have been spread under the shadow of the wreckage. Since I perceive that the beastkins are getting on guards from the humans us who are approaching them, I let Pochi and Tama to lower their hoods. The beastkins slightly drop their guards after seeing the two.

"What do you want. Human."
"I'm Hyona's little brother. I've brought a pharmacist."
"Come to think of it, I've seen you before. Go heal Hyona rather than us. It's already impossible for the fellows here. It won't be enough to buy medicines even if we sell ourselves."

It's certainly expensive if you buy them from shops.
However, this town shouldn't have problem with materials for potions if the magic hunters hunt the demi-goblins, the magic cores must be exported to the duchy capital after all huh.

There are two rabbitkins and one ratkin people who are sleeping. The degrees of their burns are more terrible than the young man's big sister. Their wounds are only covered with big leaves that seem to be for soothing fever.
They were recovered by just making them drank the same potion that Hyona-san had drank thought. I feel that the recovery effect is better, I wonder if it's because beastkins have good endurance. Since the three also look famished, I give them high calories food & sleeping medicines.

Since there are several people who have slight burns near the tenement, I leave one bottle of burn ointment. It's just a small bottle with 20 grams of it inside though. It's also a leftover from when I was experimenting for its effect, but it should be more effective than the one on sale.

◇

"Young master, here it is."
"Young master, it's here."

I said my farewell to the beastkins who expressed their gratitudes exaggeratedly, and arrived at my original goal, the harbor. The daughters of the rabbitkin, who are a 9 years old, and a 6 years old, that I've saved earlier have guided us.

Baskets full of fruits are lined up on the mats. There are small melon-like fruits inside a basket. There are also tachibana citrus and Japanese pears-like fruits. It seems everything is something that are growing wildly in the forest near this town.

"How 'bout it, anything is one penny."

Cheap.
Since we're here already, I buy various things and share it with everyone. Of course, with the rabbitkin girls too. It seems that the children have increased before I knew it, but it's fine. The melon is quite delicious with its watermelon-like thin sweetness, although there are also unripe fruits. I'm buying several of them as souvenirs for Mia.
The fruits peddler laughs while saying, "I'm gonna close my shop early today." jokingly. I wonder if he gets into it halfway through, he distributes the fruits to the children for free. he's a good-natured man.

"Yo nii-san, how 'bout some vegetables good for your health?"

Another man who seem to be attracted to this comes to pitch his vegetables. No, I didn't come for vegetables.

I could have immediately declined him, but since Pochi and Tama were still chewing half of the melons I had bought, I asked him to show the line up

while putting small aprons on the necks of the two. Putting these aprons now might have been too late. Let's clean them with [Soft Wash] before returning to the inn. Lulu will be angry if they return like that.

In the bastket that the man has brought, bitter gourds, paprikas-like vegetables, and red tomatoes!--It's probably tomatoes--are lined up.

Since he says that I can try it, I bite one of the tomatoes. It's a tomato alright, although it's a bit overripe. Seems they're called red fruits around here. Pochi and Tama also take a bite out of curiosity, but looks like it doesn't suit their palate, their faces look complicated. Children relatively dislike tomatoes don't they.

"Are these all the red fruits you have?"
"There's a lot more on the field. But, it's still a bit more until they're ripe enough for eating."

I rather have ones that aren't this ripe, so I ask him to deliver them to the gate inn. When I gave him 10 copper coins as the payment, he vigorously rowed a small boat upstream as if he had grown wings to fly, and came back with the crops. There seems to be a small farm village on the upstream from here.

◇

Afterwards, we're trying various things like grilled dried oval squids, and grilled dried small fish.

What's with this pied piper of Hamelin situation.

After Pochi and Tama amiably shared their own shares, even though it wasn't excessive, it became like this. Well, they're something I've bought for the two, so they're free to do what they want with it.

However, seems I need to disperse them.

I pick up a decently-sized stone below, and play with it. I thought that it was light, when I check with the AR, it's not a stone, but a coconut-like fruit. It's probably unripe for eating, so it's been thrown away.

The stupid noble shows up his face on the corner of the road.

"There you are, you cursed white beasts! ■■■ ■■"

The people of this town are probably aware of this stupid noble's face. Both the adults and the children are running away scattered. There's no helping it since the opponent is a level 20 magician. Men who look to be the stupid noble's retainers, and the baronet's personal troop follow behind him. Looking from their expression, they probably also want to stop this stupid noble's act of violence.

Since he's obviously aiming for Tama who is beside me, I throw the coconut to the face of the noble who's chanting fire magic in the downtown. While leaving a comical sound, the stupid noble fell from his horse. Since he was falling on his head, I reluctantly used [Magic Hand] to kill the momentum at a bare minimum.
However, I don't need to concern myself with stopping the retainers from stepping him with their horses do I. His health decreased fast, but thanks to his level 20, he narrowly escaped death.

The retainers dismounted their horses in panic, confiscated a cart from the nearby townspeople, put the stupid noble in it, and carried him to the baronet mansion. Sheesh, what busy guys.

I clap the shoulders of Pochi and Tama who have taken up their wooden swords and stood before me, removing their tensions. The two came forward and guarded me when the stupid noble began to chant magic.

Cheers break out from the townspeople, but please excuse me from this.

9-4. At the Town of Magic Hunters (3)

Satou's here. False accusation is never missing in any society, but in a world that has social positions, they can unreasonably accuse you of crimes. In Japan, you can entrust it to the court and your lawyer, but in another world, being passive seems to be fatal.

◇

Two guards dismount their horses and come toward us.

"Oy, come with us to the station."
"That person is still a noble even though he's like that. Come obediently. I'll let you try to appeal for your life at least."

Oy oy, you're going to treat someone who threw a fruit to another one, who was trying to do something that was like firing a gun, or rather an explosion inside the town, like a death row criminal. It looks like I'll have some bad time if I follow them obediently.

I take out the silver ID from my chest, and show it to the guards.

"T, this is, so you were a noble-sama! Just, how long have you been here."
"About several hours ago. Rather than that, I've never seen that noble even in the duchy capital, where is he from? I don't think even any honorary noble of Shiga kingdom will try to use magic attack in the middle of a town."

What a thing to say even if I do say so myself. For now, I'll warn them while speaking bossily. Putting honorary thing aside, he's pretty bad of a person for trying to use magic to burn citizens in a town.

I drive it further toward the guards who are hesitating to say anything.

"Is baronet Poton aware of this behavior? Depending on the situation, I may need to inform duke-sama and marquis Lloyd of this."

The guards are averting their gazes from me.
This must mean that the baronet is an accomplice, or rather he's authorized the acts.

I have a reason for cornering the guards here.
The baronet in question is coming here followed by several bodyguards. If I had let myself caught, I would need to physically suppress them and made the talk complicated.

"Oy, guards! That's the criminal who raised his hands against marquis Dasles. Arrest him quick."

The baronet who's just arrived orders the guards arrogantly, he's a plump 40s years old man who looks like an underling. He becomes disturbed and avoids my eyes when he just looks at me who's folding my arms calmly.

"Marquis Dasles? There shouldn't be a noble like that in our kingdom. A person who should have been protecting the town couldn't possibly not only overlook the atrocities of a foreign noble, but even aid him could he?"

I calmly approach the baronet who's closing and opening his mouth. Since I'm empty handed, the guards aren't doing anything.

I take out a letter from my bag and give it to the baronet. It's something that marquis Lloyd has written when I told him that I was going to Puta town.

Baronet Poton drops his line of view towards the letter while looking doubtful, but when he sees the sealing wax that's pressed with marquis Lloyd's house crest, his face becomes cramped. He opens the letter timidly, and reads it, then his face turns blue and he's fainted just like that.

There shouldn't be anything significant written in this letter, at most there's probably an instruction to accommodate me while I'm in this town. However,

the fact that I'm an acquaintance of marquis Lloyd, and a close one at that, is probably conveyed with this letter. If I report his deeds here to marquis Lloyd, at best he's going to be stripped off his duty, although he probably won't be executed, but his peerage might be passed down to his child and be forced to retire.

Truly a fox that borrows the authority of a tiger!
<TLN: Japanese idiom, means "a small man who's acting arrogantly through borrowed authority.>
I didn't think that I would get to use my connection like this.

"I'll stop by at the baronet Poton's mansion tomorrow. I expect you to give the proper judgment to this Dasles person before then."

I tell it to the guards around in place of the fainted baronet. These people should be the kinds who will try to save their own necks, so they will probably deal with the troublesome stupid noble. A fire magician he is, it'd be a different story if he was healthy, but now that he's half-dead, they should be able to easily restrain him.

For some reason, applauses break out from the surrounding, it's very embarrassing.

Do your best today too Poker Face skill.

>Title [The Official who Protects the People] Acquired
>Title [Condemner] Acquired

◇

After the uproar, I decide to go to the firm to collect some information.

Unfortunately, the firm doesn't have any important info. At most it's only

information about the road that goes to the mountain range where Bornean is. The road seem to have been used until 200 years ago when the wyverns and beast monsters have began to inhabit the mountain range.
Even for now, the farthest village 10 kilometers from here have been engulfed by the forest, or rather the grasses.

Even if that's true, I can just cut grass with wind magic and fix the soil with earth magic I guess.

When Pochi, Tama and I have arrived at the inn, the smell of something good is drifting.

"Ha ra ha ra♪" "Ha ra he ri~♪"

The two are singing the songs for when they're hungry while buzzing their arm that are connected with mine. They spontaneously create these hunger songs according to their feeling at the time, so even I don't know how many are the types.
<TLN: "Hara hetta" is a Japanese slank for "I'm hungry.">

"We're back."
"Welcome back~ Ah, good. The innkeeper's told that the meal will be ready soon~"
"Master, they say that they can bring the food here, but they recommend us to eat at the dining room since the guests are sparse today."
"Did you ask whether it was fine for non-humans?"
"But of course. It's okay he said."

A, arisa. Wasn't that phrase old even for Showa.
I pull myself together, and give the melons to Mia as her souvenirs.

"Then, let's might as well go to the dining room."

Looks like the ordered tomatoes have arrived from the harbor earlier, they've been put in the basket on the table. The five seedlings that I've requested, complete with the soils, are lined on the table. With this, I can secure

tomatoes even after we've arrived at the labyrinth city. This will be pointless if they sell tomatoes normally there, but if that happens, I can just cultivate it in Muno city then.

The cooking are a simple whole roast.
Looks like you eat it by scraping the meat, dip them in the white sauce put on the bowl, and eat it after you roll them with red-leaf lettuce-like vegetable. There are also other plates with steamed vegetables and pilaf lavished with plenty of vegetables for Mia.

Looks like the white sauce is mayonnaise. I didn't spread the mayonnaise since it'd have increased people who would become fat at the duchy capital, but it exists normally huh. Since I didn't see it at the duchy capital, I wonder if it's a local specialty of this town.

However, this is--

"Roasted deer meat with vegetables yummy."
"Mayo mayo~"
"Mayo nanodesu!"
"Mayonnaise is delicious indeed, but I think it's good if you eat it without adding anything first."
"Ara? It's delicious but, this mayonnaise is."

Lulu who's about to eat the roasted deer meat rolled in vegetable dipped in the mayonnaise looks around as if confirming something. Yes, the mayonnaise here is very heavy. I don't know if it's because the type of the fat is different, or if the it's due to the composition, but it feels like I'll get a heartburn if we eat too much of it.

While poking the cheek of Mia that's pouting as she's eating her pilaf in silence, I warn everyone not to eat too much mayonnaise.

"Noble-sama, does this white sauce not match your taste?"
"No, it's very delicious. Did the innkeeper make this white sauce?"

The innkeeper who had seen the situation called me out.
However, an intruder came before he could reply. The single-armed boy from earlier enters the inn while swinging his left arm.

"Kuuh, what a nice smell. Noble-sama, thanks for before. These are the two copper coins I've borrowed. It was really helpful."

I receive the two copper coins he's presenting. There probably was some quarrel when he was getting his rewards. The edge of his mouth is cut, and there's a bruise on his right cheek.

"Occhan, get me the same thing as that noble-sama's, I'll pay the bill."
"That's impossible, there's no ingredients left."
"No way~"
"You wouldn't be able to pay it even if there was any. I'll make some grilled fish with white sauce set, our specialty."
"Okay, that's alright."

The grilled fish with white sauce here is two copper coins. Is it fine, spending so recklessly like this.

"If you spend so much, won't you become unable to enter the town again?"
"That's a talk for that time. I don't know when I will die, so I'm gonna eat delicious things when I can."

Is it philosophical, or is he just not thinking the consequence.
I'm a bit worried with the three beastkin girls who are nodding to it.

"Oh right, you were talking about the white sauce. A magic hunter man with one arm who came here three months ago taught me about it. He was shrewd, unlike this Kon kid here even though they're both one-armed. Even though the price for this white sauce was quite exorbitant, I've had my money worth."
"Hey, don't liken me to that man with bad look on his face"
"Did you hear the name of that man?"
"Yeah, he said he was John Smith."

John Smith you say.
I asked about his characteristic, but the innkeeper only remembered that his face was chiseled, and he had black hair, and no left arm. I somehow assume that he's the third summoned person from Menea's kingdom.

"He disappeared from the town before anyone knew it."
"Maybe he was killed by monsters since he was a magic hunter."
"That man didn't seem like he would die so easily though."

The boy eat the fish set meal with his left arm skillfully.
He occasionally secretly looks at the whole roast of the deer meat enviously, then devours the fish set meal, so I put some deer meat on a small plate, and give it to him. It should be fine with this much.

Nana who has finished her meal earlier examines the entrance, and suddenly stands up.

Nana reinforces her physical strength while concealing her body, then moves so fast, your eyes can't caught her, to the entrance. Nana comes back with a big smile on her face while holding two ratkin children on both her arms. The children are struggling desperately to escape, but they're no match for the physically reinforced Nana.

"Master, I have safeguarded young organisms. Requesting permission to feed them."

What, feed them you say.
The three beastkin girls look like they've finished eating, and there are still a lot of the deer meat remaining anyway, so it should be alright. When I give the permission, Nana feeds the deer meat to the ratkin children while looking really happy. At first, the ratkin children were surprised themselves, but when they understood that they could eat, they began to eat like gulping down. After that, various things happened like Pochi who stuffed her throat after sensing the impending crisis, or Liza who preached the ratkin children as if she was going to eat them, but the dinner ended with a lively and fun

atmosphere.

There are three people who will be guarding the separate building. They're quite unreliable since they don't have see-through skills on top of being level 5. Since the presences of these guards act as impediment for the thieves, it might be fine just like this.

Even though we're in an inn, I decide to have three rotations of night watches just like it's always been during the night camp.
I think I'm being too vigilant, but there's no one who restrains the subordinates of that stupid noble, so they might come attacking after all.

9-5. At the Town of Magic Hunters (4)

Satou's here. There are a lot of stories with revenge as their themes, but few of them end in happy endings due to the themes of the stories. I'll pay you back 10 times! The characters shout out their exasperation like so, but I wish they don't brood over it so gravely.

◇

"I said wait! That person is also a noble! He's not someone who would do bad things."
"Move out, Kon."
"That's right, we'll be given one silver coin by just joining the encirclement on the inn."
"Right, right, how many goblins do you think that is."
"Even a good-for-nothing like you can get some money you know? Only fools would miss this chance."

I'm hearing this conversation from the magic hunters who are gathering in the bar.
That arsonist noble is still trying to do something huh.

I check on the map, there are around 20 magic hunters gathered on the vacant lot near the governor's mansion. There are also as many young people beside the magic hunters, they seem to be a gathering of outlaws when I look closer. Considering there aren't any of the guards among them, looks like baronet Poton isn't involved this time.
There are about 42 people, but there aren't anyone who has magic skills, they're only warrior or thief types. Since their levels are only ranging from 2-7, even excluding me, they aren't matches against my companions.

The foreign noble is staying in the baronet's mansion without moving. I can guess why since the alchemists in this city are low leveled, as he's only at

30% of his max health, and his bone fractures are terrible, he won't be able to move even if he wants to.

At the bar in front of me, there are the one-armed magic hunter boy, Kon, the four magic hunter women who were with him before, and also eight magic hunter beastkins. This beastkin called Ord, and his friends are strong even among magic hunters as their levels are around 7-9. The other hunters here are level 2-7, not much differences than the magic hunters on the vacant lot.

"Ord and the others, please stop drinking and make nee-san and her friends stop."
"Isn't it alright, let them go."
"Wa, Ord!"

Apparently, the beastkins are neutral, and won't help the Kon boy.

"If you don't move away soon, I'll hit you with my fist."
"Please, nee-san."
"Kena, not gonna stop you though."
"What's this Ord, it's not like you to give advice to other magic hunters."
"This isn't an advice, but a warning. We're on the side of the noble at the inn. He's the benefactor of sis boss, and we've been requested to protect the inn noble by the assembly of the beastmen."

Hoo? Is it a thank for curing their burns? I don't know who is this sis boss, but she's probably one of the people who have been cured from the burn.
If I didn't hear this conversation, they might become victims of my remote magic along with the magic hunters employed by the foreign noble.

Now then, I can't keep listening to them secretly forever can I.

"You serious? Ord, I know you guys are strong, but the opponents aren't just the twenties something magic hunters. There are also more than 50 guards right?"
"Don't worry about that. The guards won't come out."
"Who told you that? Your mother? Stay out of this!"

I cut into the conversation between the big rabbitkin man with one eye (Ord), and the leader of the women (Kena). Kena sharply spoke as if spitting out without turning around to me. Did she mistake me for some magic hunter?

"I've stopped baronet Poton with the connection from the duchy capital. He won't let out the soldiers unless he's an unparalleled idiot who's all about ruins."

When I was talking, Kena and her companions turned around after noticing Ord's eye signal. The woman companions of Kena stands up and put their hands on the grips of their swords when they see me who's armed with a sword.
I introduce myself while waving to Kon boy who's being trampled by Kena's foot.

"Heya, nice to meet you. I am Chevalier Satou Pendragon."

I calmly look around the bar while introducing myself, and confirm the consistency of the information from the map.

"I didn't intend to eavesdrop, but I've heard your talk. You're--miss Kena right? Hopefully, you guys can accompany me in a drinking bout in this bar today."
"Drinking bout? Are you trying to coax us to become your friends?"
"I'm not. I've come here to gather the latest information about the mountain range beyond the farthest village."
"Hah, if you've heard our talk, then you should know the situation you're in right? Isn't it better for you to quickly move out of the inn to escape? If you ask Ord over there, he'll open the gate at least."

Oh, this is unexpected. I didn't think that she would give me advices. She was only tempted by the silver coins reward, she doesn't seem like a bad person. Then maybe I should ask them to help smash the path of retreat of that arsonist noble.

"I have something to discuss, is it alright?"

◇

The attack on the inn starts way past midnight.
I ask Pochi and Tama who have quickly noticed it to wake everyone up, and I stop doing handicraft that I've done to kill time.

Since everyone have taken naps with armors worn, the battle preparation is quickly completed. Since we're pretending to be sleeping, there is no light. I peep through the window on the third floor, there are three separate suspicious groups coming from the street. Kena and the others have successfully slipped in behind one of the group.

I asked the women to arrest the retainers of the foreign noble, or stop them from escaping.
They're caught red-handed attacking a noble of Shiga kingdom at night. It's unfortunate that the person himself isn't present, but he probably won't be able to escape getting deported outside the kingdom if I just pull some connections.

"Bows, three people~?" "There's also one on the shadow of the roof there, so it's four nanodesu."

Pochi and Tama who were watching outside found the archers. I shoot through the shoulders of the two, who have murders on their punishment (status), with a single shot from the crossbow. In addition, I use [Remote Stun] to make the other four fall unconscious. Since there wasn't anyone beside the archers, they probably don't know that they're being ambushed.
I also use [Remote Stun] to neutralize the other people who seem to be thieves approaching nimbly from the roof. It was troublesome to match the timing as to not make them suffer serious injury from the falls.

"Then, shall we go."

Leaving Mia, and Arisa, the magicians, and Lulu who's holding the magic gun on the top floor, I bring the vanguards downstairs.
When we've arrived on the first floor, the guards of the inn who have finally noticed the unusual situation are furiously knocking the door to tell the state of emergency.
They looked surprised when they see us coming out fully armed, but I forcibly made them to go to the main building of the inn to protect it.

When the masses have encircled the inn, one of the retainers of the foreign noble step forward and begins his speech, or rather, proclaiming death sentences. Looks like these retainers are lower nobles.
However, doing speech here like this. What was the point of approaching here without light then.

"Upstart who has foolishly taken the side of the cursed white tigers!"

Is this guy a genuine idiot?

"Your sin is supporting the filthy beastkins!"

You shouldn't discriminate people by race.

"Your sin is injuring our great master, Dasles-sama!"

It's like speaking in unison during demonstration.
I thought that they shouldn't have said his name, but they may be thinking that they're not doing anything bad.

"Your sin is--"

I wonder if it's bad if I don't hear it until the end.
From what I can infer from the retainers' talk, it seems that even though marquis Dasles had taken the white tiger princess party, who were running from the weaselkin chase, under his care, they suddenly massacred the family of the marquis, stole his money and treasures, burned the houses of the

citizens, and massacred the people. In addition, the late king who was visiting the mansion at that time was also killed too.

I'd like to say that then it can't be helped that he harbors grudges, but it's too unnatural. Killing your protectors bears nothing but disadvantages, and there's even more no reason for them for burning and killing the people. Instead, it's easier to understand if you presume that the weaselkin who would be in trouble if the late king helped humans and tigerkin to join hands, so they laid the blame to the white tigerkin princess and her cohorts.

Well, regardless of the situation, they still have to be dealt, so the details don't matter.
I open the gate on the courtyard from the inside, and come out before them.

"Aren't you satisfied yet? Your speech is too long, the outlaws around you would grow tired y'know?"
"You're making a fool of yourself. I'll make you regret for deliberately appearing from the other side of the wall. Do it! Slaughter this guy!"

The man who was having a speech comfortably gives the order while his face is reddening in anger. The outlaws around reply that by taking out their weapons. They sure are excited~
Kena and her friends slip beside the two retainers of the foreign noble who are behind the mass. Those two have higher rank than the one who was giving speech.

"You DTs, declaring that I will be your opponent."
<TLN: DT=Doutei=virgin guy.>

Nana provocated the outlaws who were attacking, and then jumped out.
There's no sense in that right? Yet, several people are facing Nana, so it might be effective.

Pochi and Tama activate [Shell] on their magic swords, and mow the outlaws down like we're in a gag manga.
Nana who puts on physical reinforcement pushes several people with her

large shield, and repulses the magic hunter who has a great axe with her [Shell]-activated magic sword, she's quite reliable.

And, Liza pierces the shoulder of the retainer who was giving speech earlier with her spear while leaving red afterglow.

Eh?
Red afterglow?

Wait, Liza?
When I look at Liza's condition while feeling uneasy, she's just put too much fighting spirit into it. She didn't really activate magic edge, so the retainer didn't die.

Thanks to that injury, the other outlaws have also begin to run away as if it's an effect of the punishment.

"O, oy, isn't that a magic spear."
"Those three are also magic sword users."
"Oy, oy, I didn't sign up for this. Like I'd fight those guys even though I'm not a knight."

A lot of the outlaws turn their back and flee.
I'm fine with leaving anyone but ones with serious crimes, but they've been neutralized after Mia shot [Mustard Bomb], and Tama threw stones toward them who had stopped while coughing violently.

I knock out the two retainers whom Kena has caught with the fairy sword while in its scabbard and have them arrested. Kon who's sprawling on his feet doesn't seem have any serious injury too.

By the way, the outlaws on the opposite side of the inn have been arrested by Ord and the others with cover fires from Arisa and Lulu.

◇

"S, sir Pendragon! What is this uproar so late at night."

I've come to the mansion of baronet Poton while bringing along the outlaws who have been tied together with the retainers of the foreign noble. The first speech of the baronet when he saw us was that. Apparently, the uproar this time doesn't have anything to do with the baronet. However, let's follow Arisa's advice, and act as if the baronet involvement has been decided to make him run toward his own self-protection.

"You said that as if you weren't involved yourself. The retainers of that Dasles had brought these many outlaws to attack the inn where was staying."

Ah, I really can't get used to this noble-like speech.

"Wa, it doesn't have anything to do with me. I'm unrelated."

Alright, I only have to make him arrest the foreign noble and take him to the duchy capital, and it'll be a mission complete.
However, the situation advances outside my expectation.

"So you've even harmed our retainers, you pawns of tigerkins! It can't be helped like this, I'll take care of you with my own hands!."

Dasles comes out while shaking and supporting himself with a cane. Since his coat is only hanging on his shoulders, I can see many bandages covering the upper half of his body. The fool started to chant fire magic, so I threw the nut that I had prepared beforehand on his head.
When Dasles kneels on the ground, the guards who finally react, pin the guy to the ground.

"Baronet Poton. Just now, Dasles had tried to shoot fire bolt toward me with clear intention to kill. Moreover, you were beside him. As a governor, you have to give your judgment."
"S, someone with low rank like me cannot give death penalty. First, we have

to transport him to the duchy capital, drag him to the royal capital from there, and entrust the judgment to the king."

Oh, he can't be punished at the duchy capital huh.
Since he could meet the white tigerkins if he goes to the royal capital, I'd like for him to be prisoned at the duchy capital. Well, whatever.

"You've heard him. Guards! Arrest that criminal quickly. The ring on his right hand is a tool for invocation. Don't forget to take it off."

You can actually invoke magic without invocation tool, but the power of the magic and accuracy considerably fall.
Moreover, there's a tool for rogue magician in the baronet mansion, Dasles is tied with something called [Chain of Magic Seal]. If he tries to chant spell, the mana will flows to the chain of magic seal and get dispersed, although it cannot always prevent it.

They put Dasles who's struggling while being tied with the chain of magic seal to the underground dungeon.

It's case closed with this huh.
I can just leave the treatment of baronet Poton to marquis Lloyd at the duchy capital.

Now then, I guess I'll go back to the inn and take a nap.

9-6. At the Town of Magic Hunters (5)

Satou's here. 'Rewarding goods, and punishing evils' reminds me of period dramas, but unexpectedly, it also exists in novels and manga. Of course even in the tale of another world.

◇

Early in the morning the next day, that marquis Dasles and his retainers are to be transported to the duchy capital together by ship. Since they could try to escape, about 20 guards are accompanying them.

Looks like they'll be transfered to a large ship on the town before the great river.

Now then, there's actually quite a complicated reason as to why baronet Poton was accommodating marquis Dasles.
First, marquis Dasles seemed to carry a letter of introduction from the previous earl Bobi at the duchy capital. With the backing of the previous earl Bobi, he earned the cooperation of a certain organization in the duchy territory.
And, it seemed that the son of baronet Poton who went to the school at the duchy capital admired this organization. There'd have been no problem if it ended with that, but this organization was the [Wings of Liberty], and he was in the wanted list from the duke, so it was a bit problematic.

Even though his son was put in the wanted list, that didn't mean that he would be relieved of his duty as a governor, but there were many people who wanted his position, so it was very possible that someone would use it to drag him down.

And, at that time, the fact that the son of baronet Poton was a part of [Wings of Liberty] wasn't well-known.

Furthermore, it seems that this son is safe and currently taking shelter at the other hunting mansion of earl Bobi house at the duchy capital. Of course, if the authority at the duchy capital find out about the location, the son will be arrested, and probably executed later.

Thus, marquis Dasles held the cards for the [Scandal], and the [Life] of baronet Poton's son, and forced the cooperation and submision of baronet Poton.

Of course, he didn't openly talk about this at first.

He told various excuses like he was threatened with fire magic, he had a debt from the person who introduced the marquis, earl Bobi, or that got some bribes, but since they were all full of holes, he finally confessed after I raised the Interrogation skill to maximum.

I've made a deal with him.

Normally, I should have reported to the duke and the kingdom authority about the remnants of the [Wings of Liberty] holed up at the hunting mansion, but I decide to leave it to marquis Lloyd as the leader of the faction to deal with them. As expected, I cannot overlook them.

Marquis Lloyd might try to hide the scandal of his faction, but I expect him to dispose the remnants of the [Wings of Liberty] in the process.
Marquis Lloyd will probably rescind baronet Poton as a governor of this town, but at least he can avoid the worst scenario where this is used by his political opponents to execute or deprive him of his peerage.

Since I've sent a letter for marquis Lloyd pertaining the details, the issue with baronet Poton will probably gradually subside in time.

Now then, I demanded three things from him.

First, distribute the fortunes of the arsonist noble to his victims as the reimbursements.

Second, establish an orphanage in this town.
Third, establish a place for the young magic hunters to train under the retired ones.

He had shown disapproval for the third, but we compromised by making it monthly course instead of permanent one. Since it's for the sake of decreasing loss among the magic hunters, it's (the course) probably going to be alright even if the governor change.

I didn't expect that he accepted the second one easily, but it seemed that there was an orphanage that opened until the end of service of the previous governor, so the building itself still remains at the outskirt of the town. The fund for the orphanage stopped once the governor changed, but since I requested it in the letter for the marquis Lloyd, it's probably going to be alright. It's a request through and through. I'm not coercing him.

Now then, as for the management of everyone who has attacked the inn, they're all turned into slaves.
Of course it doesn't apply to the people who I've asked to infiltrate.

The outlaws that have attacked the inn, and most magic hunters are turned into crime slaves.
However, if too many of the magic hunters were decreased, this town's main specialty, magic cores gathering would stagnate, and so the ones who didn't have offenses before the incident were picked from the ones who had first-class crimes, and turned into common slaves with time limit instead.
The ones who become common slaves are to work under the official of Puta town, and their terms as slaves are decreased in exchange for their compulsion to hunt monsters.

Lastly, I actually got a lot of things from the incident this time.

First, I got equipments confiscated from marquis Dasles, and the money that he had used to pay the assailants, moreover, I also got some of the money from selling the crime slaves to the slave trader.
The latter aside, I don't know why the former comes to me. When I inquired,

it wasn't bribes, but payments for capturing criminals from the administration. Ah, confusing.

To be honest, I didn't need the money, but I thought that I could just distribute it after, so I accepted it.

As rewards for this incident, I gave several bottles of diluted potion, and some silver coins for Kena, Ord, and the others. Kena and the women were pondering hard whether to sell the potions for money, but in the end they decided to keep it. Life can't be replaced after all.

I also intended to split it among the victims of Dasles who had their houses burnt, but they gratefully refused.
Instead, I got several baskets of nuts and medicinal plants that they've gathered in the forest first thing in the morning. Since it seem to be thanks for the medicine yesterday, I gratefully accept it. I make baked sweets from those nuts, and pass it to Pochi and Tama for them to share it among the children. The two came back totally exhausted, so it must've been accepted delightfully. Since Nana who had gone with the two looked glossy even while being expressionless, there were a lot of children it seems.

It's decided that baronet Poton is going to pay for the compensations of the villages that Dasles has attacked, so there's nothing in that front from me.

And also, I don't know who's spread the rumor, but it seems that it has been decided that I like tomatoes. Merchants come visit me to the inn while bringing a lot of tomatoes as presents.
There are different kinds of tomatoes than the one at the harbor mixed in, but tomatoes aren't going to be unneeded no matter how many I have, so I gratefully accept them.

However, I firmly refused the suggestion to have a bronze statue of me, as the town's celebrity, put on the harbor. As expected, something like a bronze statue is too embarrassing. They asked me to receive at least the [Puta Citizens Medal of Honor], so I accepted it.

Do the people of this world like medal or something?

◇

"Oh, it moved! It moved just now right?"
"Yeah, if you keep it up, you'd be able to move it like I've displayed earlier, work hard."
"Un, thank you! noble-sama."

Even though it was something that I made to kill time while waiting for the raid, it's working properly huh.

I've given a simple artificial arm made of wood to Kon boy.

The artificial arm has mitten-like part that has movable fingers. When you spread mana on the artificial arm, the magic circuit on the joints will react and the wire will be winded and move the the fingers. If you stop the mana supply, the spring board will spring into action, and the hand will open. Since the opening and the closing response is slow, it's probably impossible to hold weapons to fight with it.

You can also wind it manually for the possibility that he can't handle the mana well. Of course I've also made the lock function.

This artificial arm is a bonus for Kon boy. If he didn't do his best, Ord and the others who were acting in behalf of me would have been included among the criminals.

I've also left him with a leather armor and boots from wolf leather, and also a breast plate and a helmet made from the shell of rhinoceros beetles that are strong for its lightness. I've also made a shield from the rhinoceros beetle shell that can be attached on the joint of the artificial arm.

Since his weapon is a keepsake from his father, I only fix it by sharpening it.

"Uwaa, is it fine, this many! Look at me nee-san, I'm like an explorer!"
"However, if a beginner like you have these kind of equipments, won't the idiots take them away from you?"
"It's going to be alright, I didn't use expensive materials."

Kena is slightly concerned toward the boy who is honestly rejoicing.
I've thought so at this time, but in the future, I find out that these shells of rhinoceros beetle are unexpectedly expensive materials in the labyrinth city. Since the rumor that these materials aren't expensive spread in this city, it's probably alright.

"Then, then, make some for us too."
"I'll reward you with my body."
"If it's your body, far from rewards, you'd need to pay him instead."
"How cruel! It's no different than yours."

Since I've expected these fussy reactions, I've already made breastplates from the rhinoceros beetle shells to give them. They're just simple enlarged Japanese archery-type chest protectors that can be attached to leather armors.

Of course they're not free.

In exchange, I ask them to bring Kon boy together to hunt monsters, it's fine for just one month. In this world, if there's an opportunity, and you can survive, it should be easy to level up.

I feel a bit too busybody, but it's fine if it's just this much.

That's why, Arisa, stop that grinning.

◇

Several days after the raid, we're finally able to depart Puta town.

The wagon would be buried by nuts and tomatoes if we stay any longer.

"Then, young organisms, we'll be parting briefly."
"Nana, you go? You're going?"
"Nana, won't stay together? You can't?"
"Nana, don't go."

After saying goodbye to the 3-5 children, Nana mounts the horse.
I've thought that she'd want to take 1-2 of them, this is unexpected.

"They are in a base now. I have judged that the journey is dangerous for young organisms' life."

By 'base', she probably means the provisional orphanage.
Although the bed are just only spread mats, it's better than sleeping under the hanging roof outside people's houses, or under the trees. There are around 50 orphans, whom Nana has gathered from the downtown, living in the provisional orphanage. The orphans are actually three times that number, but we weren't able to gather them all.

I was going to donate several gold coins to the caretakers of the orphanage, but they gently declined it. There doesn't seem to be any place where gold coins can be used in this city. It couldn't be helped, so I donated 100 kilograms of rice and 100 copper coins. I pray that they won't embezzle it.

We leave the town with the grand farewell from the children, the beastkins, and the magic hunters.
Several fast children are running in parallel with the wagon, but they quickly become tired, and get left behind.

Nana seems to turns her head toward the city several times as if she's reluctant to part.

The wagon continues on the highway, or more like an animals trail overgrown with grasses.
First, toward the farthest village, then cross the mountain range on the

southeast toward the forest of Bornean.

9-7. Highway of Weeds

Satou's here. I liked science experiments during my primary and middle school days. Among them, I was really thrilled with electrolysis that separates oxygen and hydrogen. I feel that making up magic tools bring the same kind of excitement as these days.

◇

Not less than half a day after we've passed through the farthest village with population of 200 people, the road begins to be overgrown with weeds and can't be seen.

"The road's condition is just like we've heard isn't it. Are we really going to advance on this road?"
"Yeah, let's cut it for now."
"Leave it to me~" "I'll work hard nodesu!"

I got off the wagon while saying so, Pochi and Tama chased after me after taking grass sickles from the toolbox in the wagon. After posing as if 'clink'-like sfx written on the background, they begin to push their way through the thickets.

No, you girls, I'm going to use magic here?
Since the two are so eager while looking like they're having so much fun, I can't bring myself to stop them. I guess I'll wait until they're tired.

"Master, permission to participate the strategy meeting. Reporting for a different style of grass cutting."

I don't know if the figures of Tama and Pochi cutting the weeds touched Nana's heartstrings or something, but I took out a long grass sickle and pass it to her.

"Master, it looks like the three are motivated to cut the weeds with the sickles, but we don't know how long until we arrive to the base of the mountain. How about we hire the people from the village earlier to cut through it, or spread oil and burn the weeds?"
"It'll be bad if it turns into forest fire, so the burning is forbidden. I'll cut them with magic after Pochi and the others are tired."

That reminds me, I heard that Mia created road in the forest during their way to Muno city back then, but when I asked her, she replied, "Impossible". She can probably only use it for a short course.

Since there are ingredients for medicines and cuisines mixed among the weeds, I leave Arisa and Mia to gather them. I ask Lulu and Liza to prepare for lunch.

"I wonder what~ is that?"
"Hmm? It's a kiln."

Since I saw characters in the manga I had read a long time ago baked pizza with a kiln, I made this one by using earth and fire magic. I must say that I've done a good job for an improvised thing. Even though it's simple, to be able to make it faster than making a cup ramen is too wonderful.

While having a sidelong glance to Arisa who's fallen to the ground with a dry smile, I take out the pizza dough that I've left fermenting in the Item Box.
I take out the tomato sauce I've made in Puta city and spread it on the pizza dough. As for the toppings, there are cheese of course, and also bacon and salami that are standard for pizza, I've also another type of pizza with lots of vegetables like sliced tomato, asparagus, eggplant, and paprika.

Since the pizza dough is thin, seem that it won't be enough to satisfy the appetites of hara heri girls. I guess I'll make some cube steak and french fries as the side menu.

"It stretches~?" "Hot hot, nanodesu."
"Uwa wa, stupid good~"

"Nn, delicious."

The juvenile troupe are awfully excited, looks like they like the pizza. Pochi and Tama get sticky from the dripping cheeses, they have to wash their faces later.
Lulu and Nana seem to like it too, but not to the degree like the four. After eating one slice of the pizza, Liza sets her sight to the unmarked cube steak. She's really unwavering.

I'm glad that they're eating it happily, but I stop Arisa who looks like she'd eat too much. She looks at me reproachfully, but she seems to understand after I explain about the dreadfulness of rebound. The diet back then was hard after all.
That's why Arisa. Please stop looking like that at Pochi and the others eating pizza.

◇

Since Pochi and the others are satisfied, I decide to open the path with magic from the afternoon.

First, I fire [Air Blade] that follows close to the surface of the ground along the road.
The wind released from the short wand cuts the weeds while leaving 10 centimeters of it above the ground. The wind continues on while cutting some slightly elevated grounds, and bushes along the way. In the end, it finally stops 200 meters ahead on a small five meters tall cliff.

"You, you really should learn to stop overdoing it."
"Nn, destruction of nature."

Was it too shocking, Arisa grumbled with more unreserved tone than usual. Is it because you're scolding me that Liza is taking regretful pose.

The fact that the trees along the road are cut is within my expectation, but for even the cliff to be cut in two and crumbles is beyond my expectation.

If we advance just like this, the horses can sprain their legs from the unseen ramp, and soft grounds, so I decide to prepare the soil with earth magic.

This time I'm not using [Wall], but the very thing itself, that is [Flat Land] magic. Seems it's a magic that's used frequently by not only the army, but also the general populace. It was a magic from the scroll that I had bought from the firs magic shop I visited in the duchy capital, but I didn't have opportunity to use it until now.

I set the range to be the course of the road and exercise the magic. Since the ground is covered by weeds, I don't know if the soil really has been prepared, so I check the terrain on the map. Looks like it's been leveled without problem.

Since the cut weeds are hindering the horses feet, the wagon isn't speeding up. The wheels are also looking like they'll slide. I instruct the wagon to running slowly at only several kilometers per hours speed, we're going while opening the path anyway.

I'm leading while using magic, and Pochi and Tama who are walking while picking up herbs and medicinal plants from the cut weeds. Liza and Nana are removing bushes and fallen trees that are out of bounds from the road. Arisa and Mia are sorting the gathered materials.

However, it'll inevitably take some time. Naturally, the road to the mountain range is not just extending straight, and not flat as there are undulations too. Particularly, the road goes around hills, low-laying mountains, and valleys.

Since I don't have any other good plan, we're advancing on while opening the highway, and I decide to camp on the bank of the streamlet 10 kilometers ahead.
Although there are around 20 demi-goblins 1 kilometers away from the planned camping ground, they seem to have become frightened by the sound

of vegetations cutting and ran away very fast. It's going to be safe tonight.

I left the dinner preparation to Lulu and went back to the place where I started to clear the path, I put a rough 100 meters wide mud wall [Wall] there. With this, there won't be strange rumor about the road that suddenly appears.

◇

That night, I've assembled an aerodynamic engine that's been half completed.

However, the control is difficult.

After it was finished, it did float when I tried to put mana into it little by little, but it was bad after that.

After the engine fed on a certain amount of mana, it rotates down to the ground with a plop, and then it powerfully plunges to the nearby tree.

Apparently, the fins that are composed on the aerodynamic engine each has its own fixed output on top of having the so-called power band. Due to that, you can't just pour mana into like normal magic tools as it will rotate off-balance and accelerate suddenly.

Looks like it needs a control circuit for tuning the output, but there's nothing about that in the documents I have at hand. There isn't also anything about how the control of aerodynamic engine is difficult written in the documents, don't tell me that the author of this document actually hasn't assembled the engine himself.

"Or maybe the control itself isn't something that's impossible to do?"

Although the frame of the engine that has hit the trees and the shrubs are broken, the fins and the magic circuit themselves are fine, so I'm going to challenge it again. I can more or less make the aerodynamic engine floats for

about 30 seconds, but since I have to concentrate on it all the time, it's too bothersome. If it's like this, even lifting the wagon with [Magic Hand] is better.

I'm searching for any other hints until late at night.

◇

The following day, we're going to travel by air.

Of course it's not like I've found some breakthrough way to control the aerodynamic engine.
I've just switched my way of thinking--that's a bit presumptuous.

If it can't be done with magic, then I can just make use of science!

I've only noticed that.
I've become too reliant with magic just because I'm able to create some magic tools. I'm just going to make normal balloons and use them to travel in the air.

Although it was hard after I got the idea.

At first I wanted to make hot-air balloons, but when I thought about the number of the people and the horses, I abandoned the idea. It's a bit too heavy.

Therefore I decided to fill it with light gas like blimps.
The problem is the material for the balloon. When I was doing the preliminary calculation, it seemed that it was necessary to make an ark big enough to carry people and horses in the air.
I search through the storage, and the parts from the parasites of the great monstrous fish seem usable. The specimen that stole life until it became level 50 had particularly grown quite big, so I'm going to use it.

Since there wasn't place that was convenient enough, I flew back to the open space in the underground labyrinth at the duchy capital. The place is not the one I usually use, but on the lower floor that's half submerged in water.
I've decided to make the balloon for the blimp, and the hydrogen for the buoyancy here.

I successfully made the balloons from the parts of the parasites, but I couldn't make something too big, only ones with just enough length. Thus, I decided to make small balloons with one meter diameter and stuff them into a big web.

To create the hydrogen, I make use of [Pure Water], [Discharge], and [<<Electronic Control>>] magic. Since I use [Air Control] to prevent the separated gas from mixing, it's progressing relatively well.

I might as well store the oxygen I've separated into different balloons.

I made a mistake during the operation once and the balloon exploded, but since I immediately deployed [Air Shield] at once, there wasn't any victim like burning clothes, although I was a bit surprised. I'm glad that it's a sturdy labyrinth. It's worth the trouble of going far.
Since the force of hydrogen explosion was greater than I expected, I combined the hide of the great monstrous fish and armored newt's bones to make fire and blast proof ceiling on the ark. The hide of the great monstrous fish are something that I've taken when I was cutting the meat. Since the hypodermis is thick, I only use the epidermis this time.
I make another hydrogen balloon explode as a test, looks like it can defend against it without problem.

I go back to the place where I experiment with the aerodynamic engine, place the ark on the trees around the area, and attach the balloons on it.

I go toward the camping ground while imagining everyone's face when they see the airship.

9-8. Air Travel

Satou's here. I've boarded airplanes for business trips before, but I've never ridden on a flying blimp. I have made some hot-air balloon in my school days, but there are many different things between a dummy model and the real thing.

◇

"Hey, won't you raise the altitude? Don't the beasts that hang around the treetops will want to get on the airship?"
"Nah, it's alright."

Arisa's concern is right on mark.
Actually, the airship has been jumped on twice since its departure by beasts that are brimming with curiosity. Of course since it was dangerous, I stopped their momentum with [Magic Hand] by matching the timing when they were about to jump.
All kinds of birds are also coming, but since none of them is like the crow from western anime with beak that looks dangerous for the balloons, I leave them alone.

Thinking for if the airship crash, the airship is advancing only slightly higher than the top of the trees.
I use [Air Control] magic to propel the airship forward. Since it's not originally a magic for flying an airship, the airship only flies at 15 km/h max. Since there's a high probability that the web holding the balloons breaking if I use [Air Cannon] like I've done when I was using Sky Drive, I won't use the magic.

The speed itself is slow, but since it's going in a straight line, the airship covers more distance than the wagon.

I fold the wagon's canopy and put it inside the airship ark along with the

horses. I've thought of putting the wagon into the storage, but since the airship can float just fine with it, I leave it outside.

I've made observation windows on all directions in the ark. Even though I've said windows, they're just holes with covers. I've made the side wall higher than the horses. The ceiling, or rather a protective wall, that's separating the blimp and the ark is made of the great monstrous fish's material.

Tama has climbed and sat on that side wall, she has been watching the passing scenery since a while ago. It's dangerous, but since I will pick her before she hits the ground even if she falls, I let her do as she pleases. Tama probably won't fall.

Nana seems to be gazing outside from the rear window. Even though Nana herself seems to think that the rear scenery is the cutest, I don't understand just how is it cute. The day where I can understand it might come soon.

Arisa, Mia, and Lulu who don't have anything to do are playing ayatori since awhile ago. Putting aside Arisa and Mia, I didn't expect Lulu to not be afraid.

And then, whenever Tama leans forward out of curiosity, the ship sway--

"Tama, it's dangerous nodesu! What would we do if we fall nodesuka!"
"That's right! Tama, behave yourself. Sky, we're up in the sky. We can't fly if we fall you know?"

Pochi who is sitting on my lap while I'm sitting on a captain-like chair, and Liza who's holding the back of my chair diagonally behind me without moving an inch warn, or rather, reproach Tama.

"It's alright~"

Tama answers in her own pace.

"I, it's not alright nodesu. Master! Don't laugh, put your hand here nanodesu. It'll be dangerous if you don't hold on properly nodesu."

"You hear me, Tama. It's punishment time if we fall to the ground you know?"

Seems Pochi and Liza aren't good with air travel.
Their voices have been seriously scared since a while ago. I've already expected Pochi to be scared, but I didn't even expect Liza to be frightened.

Whenever the airship shakes, Pochi jolts and petrified on my lap. Pochi's ears are closing down since a while ago. Looks like she's still uneasy with just sitting on my lap, she makes me put my hand on her stomach.
Liza aren't only holding the chair, she's also secretly clutching the sleeves of my clothes. I pretend not to notice it.

Of course Tama's lightweight body isn't enough to incline the ship.
The culprit is me.

Since Tama was leaning her body like she was going to fall, I used [Magic Hand] to match it and shook the airship, but for some reason, it wasn't Tama, but Pochi and Liza who were overreacting.
Since Pochi's reaction is cute, I've done it a few more times inadvertently, but let's refrain myself now.

◇

Now then, even though it looks like it's going smoothly, there are more problems with air travel than I've expected.

The first problem is about toilet.
I intend to build it during the camping tonight, but for now, I'm going to carry the members down one-by-one with sky drive in regular interval.
I wanted to carry many at once, but instead I was made to carry them with princess carry one-by-one somehow.

The second problem is meal.

Since fire isn't allowed, we're going to have a meal with bento I've made in the morning.

"Chicks~?"
"Uwaa, it's chicks nanodesu!"
"Flowers."

The three seem to be really happy as they show me the inside of the lunch boxes.
Err, I'm the one who made those.

Pochi's and Tama's shares are patterned with chicks, Mia has chicken rice without the chicken and vegetables in the shape of flowers.

"You're really~ hardworking aren't you. I didn't think that I would see characters bento here (this world)."
"Ara, even Arisa likes this one better after all?"

Lulu makes fun of Arisa who's looking amazed.

"Will it break if I eat it~?"
"Is it okay to eat this?"
"It's okay, they're food after all."
"Nn."
"Look really delicious~."

The two who are looking at the character bento and me alternatively in delight and anguish look cute. Mia seems to hesitate as to where to start. Except for these three's bento, the dish for everyone is the same, though there are individual differences. Liza gets a lot of meat, while it's lighter for Lulu and me.

"Pochi, Tama! I will safeguard those characters bento. If you eat something that cute--"

It was a failure of me for not anticipating this kind of reaction from Nana for

the characters bento.

"You can't~"
"You can't nanodesu."

As it will be dangerous if the horses get agitated if they make a ruckus in the narrow ark, I raise the three of them with [Magic Hand] to stop the racket.

"Master, this is an unfair capture. Requesting liberation."
"You made a ruckus in the narrow ark, so you're guilty."
"Please reconsider!"
"No. Eat in the air just like that for today."

Good grief, we can finally continue the meal now.
I'll make characters bento for Nana too tomorrow. No, maybe it's better if I don't make characters bento while we're traveling by air.

"Master."

Nana isn't giving up today--

Whatisshedoingiwonder?

Using unthinkable sexy technique, she slips out of the restrain.
Nana is approaching Pochi and Tama while her top is bare, but the two seem to have finished their meals. The lunch boxes might have been too small.

Lulu puts a cloth on Nana who's fallen down and placed her hands on the floor.

Using sexy technique like that, she's grown up.
No, that's not it. That is not it. I have to lecture her later. Yup, let's put the scene earlier in the folder inside my brain. Pictures aren't crime.

Of course I didn't use the photography magic.

◇

The third problem is that it attracts attentions.

Since we're deep in the mountain, there's no need to worry with people, but there seem to be curious monsters and animals as they are following from behind without letting go.

We've arrived at the base of the mountain in the second day, but it was hard to clean up the animals that had gathered when we went down to the camp ground yesterday. Since Pochi and the others were happy with, "Prey!", let's treat it as a good thing.

Originally, it should be unexpectedly hard to ascend and descend with something like an airship. That is because you need to adjust the buoyancy. However, in our case, since the buoyancy decreases if I put the balloons into the storage, we can easily descend. After putting away some amount of the balloons, I can use [Air Control] until we descend to the ground, and then I can retrieve them all afterwards.

Today, the airship is anchored on the side of a lake.
Since the part with the balloons is about 20 meter wide, it's hard to find a place to put it down. Today I lower it on the water surface and retrieve the balloons.

After putting the airship on the bank, Liza and the others immediately intercept the monster. The opponent is the Horn Snake that has been running in parallel with the airship ark since a while ago. Since Arisa and Mia are backing them, I prepare the dinner together with Lulu.

After everyone is done with the hunt, let's go on a stroll around the lake by riding horses while also making them exercise.

◇

"Arisa! Hold back the snake's attack for moment. Nana! When the snake stops moving, put your shield up again."

They seem to have an unexpectedly hard fight.
Pursuing Liza and Nana, the snake that's come breaking out of the forest is quite big. I can't see how many meters is its length, but it's at least as thick as Mia's waist.

The horn is between its eyes pointing straight about 50 centimeters long. This snake's horn seems to have paralyzing poison, but before that, you're going to be seriously injured if you're pierced by this horn.

I'm on alert while deploying [Magic Hand], and [Flexible Shield] so that I can intervene anytime.

The snakes stands up forming sickle-shaped neck about 3 meters high, and as Nana is about to assault it, Arisa keeps the snake in check with the space magic [Isolation]. This magic seems to make a wall out of space gaps, but it's quite fragile. When we tried it before, I broke it by just hitting it without even using [Magic Break]. Arisa was somehow mad, but wasn't it alright since it was an experiment.
According to Arisa, one should have needed to use [Magic Break] or [<<Remove Isolation>>] of the same space magic to destroy this [Isolation] magic.
As for me, I feel that I can destroy magic that intervenes with [The Other Space] like shadow magic or summoning magic just fine.

Leaving that aside, Nana puts up [Shield] again, and seems to have finished chanting [Sharp Edge].

Arisa removes the barrier, and the second round begins.
First, Mia fires off [Water Cutter], but the horn snake easily avoids it.
Continuing on, Nana executes provocation.

"Now, come! I declare, I'll make you realize that you don't have arms or legs."
<TLN: Japanese idiom for 'can't do anything.'>

No well, snakes don't have arms or legs.
The horn snake uses its horn to repeatedly stabs at Nana. Pochi and Tama are attacking from the sides aiming for its body, but their attacks don't quite reach since the tail obstructs them.

Liza activates magic edge and is taking a posture to attack, at that time--

That thing appears from the shadow of the forest.

--It's not aiming for fisherman's profit right?
<TLN: Japanese proverb for 'profiting while others fight.' Why don't I just use that then? Because it's the next chapter's title. ;>

9-9. Fisherman's Profit

Satou's here. During the midsummer day of the ox, it's nice to be able to eat something that you don't usually eat like kabayaki, or winter solstice pumpkin, isn't it. Although, there are arguments from both side when it's about valentine day...

<TLN: From wiki, Kabayaki (蒲焼) is a preparation of fish, especially unagi eel, where the fish is split down the back (or belly), gutted and boned, butterflied, cut into square fillets, skewered, dipped in a sweet soy sauce-base sauce before being broiled on a grill.>

◇

The thing that appears in the forest sky is a wyvern.

Its aim is not us, but the horn snake, as it's swooping down on the defenseless body of the horn snake while completely ignoring us.

The horn snake which was obstinately attacking Nana seems to notice it too, it stops its attack and turns its sickle neck towards the wyvern.

"Liza, leave this to me."
"Yes! Pochi, Tama, take some distance. Arisa, Mia! Use attack magic while the horn snake stops moving."

I strike the wyvern from the side with the short stun that I haven't used for a long time.

It didn't seem to think that we would attack it, the magic hit it directly and it crashed to the forest, mowing down several trees along the way.
The wing span of this wyvern is about 10 meters long. Rather than a dragon, it looks more like a Pteranodon. It's really like a fantasy wyvern to have poison on its tail.

<Rathalos approves>

The horn snake gets half of its body cut by Arisa's [<<Dimension Cutter>>], and its blood grandly scatters. Mia attacked the horn snake with [Water Blade] slightly later, but it seemed that the snake had resisted it as the water dispersed when it hit the body surface.

The horn snake, which didn't expect to suffer great damages, began to try to escape.
Of course Liza and the others won't allow it.

"Nana, we can't let the horn snake runs away."
"Understood. You snake, the preparation for making kabayaki is complete!"

Thanks to Nana's questionable provocation, and the barrier that Arisa had put on its retreat path, the horn snake had stopped trying to escape. Liza's magic spear, and Pochi's and Tama's short swords alternately attack the wound that Arisa has opened.
And then, when the snake movements has become dulled due to the blood loss, Nana pierces through its mouth with the [Sharp Edge]-strengthened sword, and it stops moving.

"Ey ey." "Ou nanodesu."

Pochi and Tama are having victory cry on top of the horn snake, but it's still too early.

"Pochi, Tama, you must not relax your guard. Nana, use the reinforcement magic again. Arisa, Mia, do you still have enough mana?"

Liza gives instructions, and the preparation for the next battle begins.
She's quite reliable.

Since Nana, who's in charge of the front line, is slightly hurt, I heal her with [Water Heal].

◇

Slightly later after that, a kaiju-like roar comes out from the deep of the forest. Apparently, the wyvern has finally awoken. I was cautious as to whether it could use magic by roaring like demons, but it seemed to be just a normal cry.

The advantage of wyverns is their flight ability.

Thus I thought that it would go out to the lake shore to accelerate in order to fly, but---

"Wait, that's a wyvern right?"
"Monkey~?"
"It's bouncing around nodesu."

The wyvern ran up two trees by kicking them alternately, and flew to the sky like that. Seemed that it properly used its talons to gain speed while running on the trees.

I pass some crossbows to Pochi, Tama and Lulu. They're originally anti-wyvern tools. Let's put them to use.

The wyvern is circling in the sky to amass speed, then it lower its altitude and comes attacking from the other side of the lake. It's not breaking through to the center, but looks like it's gliding while grazing the lake surface.

"Mia, strike the wyvern with [Balloon] when it reaches that bush over there. The three of you attack the wing--yes, aim at the right wing. Arisa, use the cutting magic from before on its wing. I don't mind if you cut it whole if you can."

Liza has given instructions to everyone.
Previously, it was Arisa who instructed them, but since she couldn't do it

while concentrating on magic, Liza took her place.

I also set up [Magic Hand] and [<<Flexible Shield>>].
Usually I won't interfere, but since this wyvern is level 33, and the snake earlier is level 24, I'm ready to support them anytime.

When the wyvern was nearing the bush, water vapor that suddenly erupted broke its posture. The timing was a bit late, so it didn't seem like its posture got completely broken.

"Mwuu."

I pat and gently brush the head of Mia who's slightly pouting.
Following her, Arisa's [<<Dimension Cutter>>] hit the wyvern, it only scratched its shoulder, either because her level was too low, or because it was resisted.

The bolts that Pochi and Tama have fired at the same time only shallowly injure the tip of the wyvern's nose. Lulu's bolt seems to have flown toward the day after tomorrow. It's hard to hit a flying object even if it's flying straight to you after all.

Looking at this, I guess the opponent is a bit too much?

Nana blocks the wyvern attack with the [Shield] that she's put in front of her, and her own big shield. The wyvern is probably accustomed to combat as it's not using head-butt, but its talons to attack from the side. Since Nana's health gauge is rapidly decreasing, I quickly put the flexible shield between them. Mia has begun chanting to heal Nana, so I entrust it to her.

The wyvern kicks Nana once again and then goes back to the sky. Liza's thrust seems to have grazed its foot, but it doesn't seem to give much damage. I use ground shrink to catch Nana who was hurled away. There's not enough softness. Damn you armor.
Mia has joined the wyvern pursuit, so I heal Nana with my magic.

The bolts from the crossbows, and the attack magic successfully hit the wyvern by aiming for when it's slowing down while trying to go back to the sky. Lulu's bolt seemed to have hit it too. She's taking a triumphant pose beside me, so I congratulate her.

However, the wyvern only suffers some small injury, it's not enough to defeat it.

Seems that it has recognized us as formidable foes, it begins to aim for weaker individual. It's coming for Arisa while not slowing down, trying to catch her with the talons on its hind legs. Nana provokes it, but its aim is unmoving.

As expected, I can't call this a training if a victim falls. I move in front of Arisa with ground shrink and kick the wyvern.
Since it was going to escape over head, I quickly grabbed its tail and slapped it to the lakeside.

They should have enough anti-air training already, so I quickly approach, and cut the wyvern's neck with [Magick Sword].

The magick swords looks just like the shield and protection magic from nature magic, transparent like glasses. I can freely change the blade from the size of a dagger to a two-meters long great sword. It can become extremely sharp, but in exchange it will become thin and brittle, so it's hard to use it without sword skill.

Since I was troubled during the whales extermination back then, I've improved the latter magick sword version that I've ordered to be able to produce 20 meters long blade. Since the blade's strength and the likes are impossible, I don't know just how practical it is.

Arisa and Lulu have leveled up from this battle. Lulu doesn't seem like she's gained new skills. I've let her read magic books recently, but I wonder if her training isn't enough. It's unfortunate.

"It's just one point, just one point more~~~"

I ask Arisa who's stamping the ground what happens, seems like she's short of one point to raise the space magic skill level.

◇

The grilled wyvern is too bitter, so it's lacking, but the kabayaki from the horn snake is superb. It might be nice if I served it on rice boxes like Arisa had requested. I've made tofu hamburg steak for Mia's dinner. With faces full of conflicts, Pochi and Tama compare Mia's hamburg steak with the kabayaki, but they lose to the charm of meat and eat the kabayaki and the grilled wyvern in frustration somewhat.
Since the wyvern's innards contain poison, I buried them in a hole.

And then, we wash our sweat on the open air bath I've made on the lake shore after dinner.
Open air bath under the sky that's full of stars is nice after all.

Arisa who has just got out of the bath, Pochi and Tama are gathered, they drink the fruit milks that have been cooled with ice. I don't think it's good for a girl to drink it in one gulp while putting her hand on her waist, but I leave her alone, since she's properly wrapping the bath towel on her body.

"Fuuh, after some delicious meal, taking an open air bath on the lake side along with the reflection of the starry sky! On top of that, there's even the cold fruit milk, the rest has been decided, right!"

Arisa turns her head to me who's drying Mia's hair.
Please stop that guhehe laugh. I feel the danger to my body. I'll gladly welcome it after 10 years though.

"Hoi, Mia. It's over."
"Nn."

I think it's faster if I just use [Dry] of the life magic, but since Mia shows dislike while shaking her head, I still use a towel even now.

Arisa, whose mood has worsen since ignored, leans her body on my back while rambling like a drunkard, so I lift and throw her to the bed.

I plan to take the airship on the mountain range course that's away from the mass of wyverns on the summit of a mountain. I intend to take a look at it once, since I'm worried with the air current near the summit.

If anything unreasonable happens to the airship, I will fold the blimp and use [Magic Hand] to carry the airship.

While thinking about Bornean forest on the other side of the mountain range, I set off from the campground alone.

9-10. Mountain Range Encounter

Satou's here. They say that negligence is one's greatest enemy, but I think it's fine when you're at least aware that you're being careless. Recently, I've begun to think that the real scary thing may be self-conceit.

◇

The next morning, I have a reason for going ahead alone.

There's the fact that I want to look at how the wyverns react toward the air current, but I'm confirming things ahead since halfway of this mountain range is a different territory. I think it's most likely Bornean forest territory, so for the sake of my companions' safety, I should properly confirm it.

Actually I went out last night, but the air current was different, and the monsters weren't moving at night, so I went back because it was meaningless. Going back straight was embarrassing, so I cull out the stronger monsters around the perimeter of the camping ground. There were two horn snakes among the monsters I swept, I'll make another kabayaki next time.

Now then, the highest peak of this mountain range is about as high as the Everest from my original world. Wow, many 8000 meters tall mountains are lined up. Even the valley where I'm going isn't less than 4000 meters high, so it can be called a nature's stronghold.

The wyverns are most numerous on the southwestern 6000-meters tall mountain. Several dozens of them are there.

There is no wyvern on the mountain-crossing course that I've chosen, but the fan-shaped form that can be seen scattered away from the summit of the mountain along the course catches my attention. I wonder if there's something in the summit that attacks those wyverns like the wyvern from yesterday. The enemy search on the map works only in the mountain range,

so if there's really something, it's probably beyond that.

Now then, enough about the wyverns, there are several hidden villages scattered about on this mountain. Any one of them is a small village of 10-20 people. There are various races like humans, fairykin, bearmen, and such, but since they're separated quite far from each other, they don't seem to have cultural exchange or competitions.

I didn't intend to get in touch with any of the hidden village, but I saw a girl-san who was being chased by a pack of wolves, so since I didn't want to abandon her, I routed the wolves with [Remote Stun]. My figure was seen, but since I was in silver masked hero mode, it was alright.

◇

I choose a route where I won't be in a near-miss situation with the hidden villages, flying about 100 meters high above the ground along the mountain. Due to that, wyverns and flying beetle monsters attacks me in droves.
Thinking that they would be heralds for the airship tomorrow, I cut them with [Magick Swords] whenever I encounter them.
I use [Remote Arrow] only for the monsters called land urchins that shoot out lance-like needles from the ground. I feel like I'd suffer pointed-tip phobia if I fought such hedgehog-like monsters up-close.

However, there sure are a lot of monsters.

There are only a few of them around the outskirts of the hidden villages, but if these many monsters attack the villages on whim, it looks like they'll be annihilated. Let's take care as not to use magic that are too noisy or showy.

I set up the [Magick Sword] against the wyvern that's come out of the mountain recess while feeling a bit fed up with it, but the wyvern doesn't seem to have me in mind.

'Perhaps', I think so while checking the map, and I understand the being that's chasing the wyvern.

I see, no wonder it's running.

While smashing the summit that the wyvern is detouring, that being appears.

A dragon.

Black dragon.

The jet black dragon calmly flies, and then, after it glares at me while flying in the sky, it catches the flying wyvern with one bite from its jaws.
It's a large dragon that's about 100 meters long from the tip of the horn on its head to its tail. However, it's slenderer than the [Bulking and Heavy Western Dragon] in my imagination.

So they haven't become extinct huh. I immerse myself with selfish relief.

Now then, what should we do about this.

The black dragon has been really glaring at me since a while ago.

『ＧＲＯＯＯＵＵＵＵＮＮ！』

>[Dragon Language Skill Acquired]

For the time being, I guess I should talk. I raise the skill to level 5 and activate it.

"Little one, prostrate yourself. You're before the king of sky."
"Heya, nice to meet you, black dragon-san."

I wonder if I should have added honorific title? Black dragon-san sounds like a medicine's name, what's up with that. In preparation for if the other party is short-tempered, I adjust my position and put my back to face the mountains.

"Hou, you understand dragon language huh, little one."

In reality, it's hard to speak this language. If I didn't have ventriloquism skill, I might not be able to speak the words even if I understood it.

"Well then, you disrespectful one. Let's fight."

Why become like that.
To start a battle even before introducing itself, there's a limit even for battle junkies.

When my mouth is hanging to begin negotiating with it, I successively put up [<<Flexible Shield>>], and [<<Flexible Armor>>] while the crisis perception is kicking in.

Jet black color fills the view, and the mountains suffers the blow together with roaring sound.

Even though I immediately moved using the Sky Drive and the Ground Shrink, two out of the eight flexible shields I had put up were gone.

Dragon Breath.

I see, this is indeed.
Two mountains have been hollowed with just one attack. It's good that I changed my position. It probably won't reach the base of the mountain where Arisa and the others are, but in case of the worst happening.

"Hou, you've evaded Black Flame (Breath) huh. As expected of a hero."
"Thanks. I don't want to fight if possible though?"
"This is inevitable. Dragons and heroes, it's a fate for them to fight if they meet."

Wait a minute. Didn't they fight alongside Yamato-san?
The question is lost along with my voice from the second Black Flame

(Breath) roaring sound. This time I'm a bit late from escaping, but it seems that I can defend against one blow of it if I use all eight of [<<Flexible Shield>>].

The black dragon has caught up with me since I was inspecting that.
Its tail attacks me from a blind spot.

It's several times heavier than Wagahai-kun's, but lighter compared to an attack from the wild boar king.
In other words, it's not a strength that I can't endure huh.

This time I counterattack the black dragon that has lost its momentum and stopped in the air. By combining Sky Drive and Ground Shrink, I strike the heart of the black dragon with fighting game characters-like kicks.
Many scales are broken the moment a kick connects, but the kicks doesn't pierce through it. That was dangerous, I mustn't forgot that I should not kill it.

However, there were responses like glasses breaking before the scales were broken. There probably are magical defense fields on surface of the scales.

The black dragon, that has become quiet after I fling it to one of the mountain, pushes aside some debris and gets up.
It howls once on that spot--looks like it uses magic.

I'm shot with black lightning.

>[Lightning Magic: Dragon Skill Acquired]
>[Darkness Magic: Dragon Skill Acquired]
>[Darkness Resistance Skill Acquired]

This is the first time I've acquired two skills from one magic.
It's quite strong, maybe because it's a compound elemental magic. It sips through even the gaps of the dense flexible armor formation, and burn the leather armor inside. The flexible armor still has 80% of its endurance, but the leather armor has been torn.

I feel tingling for a bit, but there doesn't seem to be any strange additional effect.

Now then, what should I do.
It looks like it'll die if I shoot it with an intermediate-level magic, and using holy swords will turn it to pieces.

Of course it doesn't seem like the black dragon is open to discussions.
Can't be helped, let's talk with body language.

I drop the black dragon that's trying to fly to the ground with [Air Hamer]. I've already expected the 150-meters radius crater that it produces. Since the dragon suffers even less damage than I've expected, I randomly pound it not directly, but with [Air Hammer], and [Short Stun] while 'oraoraora'-ing, breaking the black dragon's spirit.

While taking notes of the black dragon's health, I repeat the environmental destructions.
I guard against the Black Flame (Breath) that it's thrown out of desperation with [Aqua Wall]. Apparently, the Black Flame (Breath)'s strength is in proportion with the black dragon's stamina, it doesn't have the trace of power like it's shown in the beginning. [<<Water Film>>] might even be able to guard against it unexpectedly.

Nevertheless, the black dragon's attack isn't stopping even though it's been cornered this much. Just how much of a battle junkie this dragon is. It's used not only the [Lighting], and [Darkness] magic from before, but even the [Fire], and [Wind] magic, yet everything is blocked by the flexible armor, there's no meaning to it.

"Guhahaha, this is fun hero. It's been since my fight with the heavenly dragons that I use this much power to the limit."

This dragon must have certainly troubled the heavenly dragons.
Is it intentional, or unconscious, this conversation is probably for the sake of getting my guard down. Scraping sounds are mixed in the conversation as the

dragon seemingly casts magic, jet black feelers that look like shadow whips arise from the shadow of the mountain in the surrounding below me at once. They're not only appearing from below, but also the surrounding shadow, wrapping me.

According to the log, it's a magic called [Dark Snap]. The darkness version of shadow whips huh.

By tying me, is it going to use Black Flame (Breath), or a secret advanced-level magic, or maybe a forbidden magic like the hero's companions was using.

--at this time, I was careless.

The next black dragon's attack is not magic.

It's fangs.

One bite of the primitive fang.

It's said in the picture book that I read for Pochi and the others.

The fangs of dragons penetrate through everything.

The fangs of dragons destroy even the demon lord, it's the ultimate blade.

The black dragon fang penetrates my flexible shield, and tears through my flexible armor.

And then, fresh blood overflow--

9-11. Mountain Range Encounter (2)

Satou's here. Newcomer's welcome party, year-end party, and new year's party. There are various types of feasts, but I feel that they're lubricant for communications. Drunkards who don't know their own drinking tolerances are troubling though.

◇

"Whoa!"

Just before the fang thrusts into my shoulders, I drive my fist onto it without holding back. The broken fang injures the black dragon's mouth and blood overflow from it. Well, it should be healed immediately since it's a dragon. Probably.
I twist my body using that momentum, and hit the side of the black dragon's head with a roundhouse kick.

However, carelessness really is one's greatest enemy. I didn't think that the flexible shield and the flexible armor could be smashed that easily. I was thinking of countering it when the fang was to be stopped by the flexible shield, but since it was easily drilled through, I lost my composure.

I look at the black dragon who has fainted right beside me.
Did I kick it a bit too hard? I think that there was feeling of the skull cracking, but a dragon will probably be cured immediately. They're the strongest creatures after all.

However, after waiting for nearly one hour, and even after the [Fainted] status has disappeared, the black dragon isn't waking up.

Is it playing dead?

Come to think of it, the dragons that are depicted on the picture books all like to drink. There are a lot of dragons that are heavy drinkers too in my world, I guess I should try it. If it's a non-drinker dragon, we can just fight once again. I won't let my guard down this time.

I put a barrel of liquor near the tip of the black dragon's nose. It's a strong liquor even among the breweries at duchy capital called [Dragon Slayer]. The strong drink here (this world) is different even though the alcohol strength matches, this one is famous to be severe from the first taste.

I use the broken fang to break the liquor barrel's lid, rich liquor odor spread to the surrounding. The black dragon's nasal cavity has expanded before I knew it.
The black dragon peeks, but it quickly closes its eyes in panic when it meets mine.

Err, you're too late.

"You've awoken right? Why don't we exchange cups of liquor in praises of our good fight?"
"Uuumuuu, very well, I'll make an exception for this special draw. However, this amount isn't enough for exchanging cups."

While keeping up begrudging attitude, the black dragon gets up. I understand that you're trying to keep your dignity, but it's a fail if you stare at the liquor barrel so fixatedly like that.
I'm being tactful here, and urge the dragon to go ahead and then, it begins to taste the liquor. It's surprisingly obedient.

"Umumwu, excellent. Liquor that humans made really are tasty. But, dragon liquor won't lose to it y'know? I'm returning the cup, now taste the dragon liquor--"

The black dragon howls for very long like it's singing. It is a fantastical magic that summons a spring which gushes out liquor called [Liquor Spring (Soul Well)].

Since it doesn't feel right with just drinking, I add a roasted whole wyvern, and 200 kilograms of grilled whale meat on skewers as appetizers to accompany the drink. I use the whale's small bones for the skewers. For heating, I use furnace flame (Forge).

During the feast, when I was cooking the food, I contacted Arisa with [Telephone] magic. Since there were howls and sounds of destructions like it was some kind of kaijuu great battle at the mountain where I was heading, this was to put them to ease. Arisa and Liza seems to have been worried although not to the degree like before.

And, I've told Arisa and the others that I will be back after I clean up the mess, but--

"Umu, good, good, nectar indeed."
"The liquor from this spring is also delicious. How should I say, it really goes well with meat."

--This has become a simple drinking party.
We exchange cups while I'm listening to the black dragon's stories that are mainly about its battle journey.

I'm most relieved to hear about the dragons among the stories of the black dragon.

There were only 70% of the whole dragons in the dragon valley, while the remaining 30% are located in other continents. I'm glad that they're not on the verge of extinction or something.

The dragons on this continent--except the ones that were on the dragon valley--are the black dragon in front of me, the heavenly dragons that reside on the sacred mountain to the west, and several young dragons, beside those, there are only lower dragons.

Lower dragons are more or less dragons, but they don't have clear intellect,

and are no different than beasts. According to the black dragon, likening lower dragons to dragons is like lumping goats and humans together because they are both mammals. Using goats in analogies seem to be the black dragon's favorite. I wonder if he really likes goat meat, it often comes out in his stories. Unfortunately, I don't have goat meat left in the storage, so I can't treat him with it.

While feeling relieved, I put another cup of the transparent green liquor from the spring on my lips. Drinking ginjoushu-like liquor in the depth of a forest, it's a mysterious flavor.
<TLN: A grade of sake, google it if you're curious. :>

I've only noticed that we have fought for half a day when I look at the watch after the battle is over. The black dragon's stamina is amazing. It doesn't look like a level 68 at all. In fact, I feel that he's stronger than the level 69 hero.

I'm hungrier than usual, maybe due to having a fight that lasted half a day. I must have eaten about 10 kilograms of meat already although it might look little compared to the gag-manga like scene of the black dragon gulping down meat in front of me. I have to end this soon.

In spite of that thought, I keep on consuming the appetizers one after another as the feast continues until morning. I've stopped counting after eating 30 kilogram of meat. I feel slightly worried as to where the things I've eaten are gone to while staring at my flat stomach, but that worry vanishes by the slight drunkenness.

I'll bring the dwarves along to drink together next time.

>Title [Friend of the Black Dragon] Acquired
>Title [Mountain Crusher] Acquired
>Title [Hearty Eater] Acquired
>Title [Glutton] Acquired

◇

In the dawn of the next morning, I'm crossing the mountain range on the back of the black dragon.

I want to ride on a dragon just once.

Coming out of the sea of clouds, I overlook the dwelling of the black dragon on the highest peak, and we pass the mountain range. The morning sun shines on the [Sea of Trees]. It's a forest that continues on to the horizon.

And then, at the center of the forest faraway, there's the thread that extends to the sky which I can always see ever since we've entered the duchy territory. Mia has told me the true nature of that thread.

The world tree.

However, it doesn't look like one no matter how I look at it.
If anything, it looks like nothing but an orbital elevator. Was this not a fantasy world but an SF?

"What's wrong, my kindred-spirit, Kuro. Do you find the world tree unusual?"
<TLN: Kuro can mean black.>

The Kuro that the black dragon refers to is me.

This is something that happened during the drinking bout, by the black dragon's request, I gave him a name, Heiron. He had intended to ask for a name when someone that could equal him appeared. Looks like dragons don't have habit to give inherent name among them.

Maybe because I was nanashi (nameless), I've also acquired the name Kuro from the black dragon Heiron. About this Kuro name.

From what I was told, it was the name of a child that the black dragon raised

on whim 900 years ago. Since this name is pronounced with definite Japanese language, that child might have been a reincarnated person. It seems he doesn't remember the child's race nor hair color. Even the name Kuro seemed to have resurfaced like a flash from the corner of his memory.

Going back to the main subject (leaving that aside), it's about the world tree right now.

"Yeah, I'm thinking just how far it's extending."
"That continues on to the void. I don't know how many days it'll take even with my wings."

Is that so, dragons can fly to the space huh.
It must not have anything to do with aerodynamic.

Since I'm outside the duchy territory, I use the [All Map Exploration] after a long time.
The forest before my eyes is really [Bornean Forest]. However, although it's certainly written that the forest is on the neighborhood of the duchy in the traveler's journal, I wish the distance was also written. It's no wonder that the person who's written the traveler's journal doesn't have a description for Bornean Forest.

The place where the world tree is located is in another map, yet the area of these sea of trees are a little wider than the duchy territory. Merely thousands of elves live in such vast area. And then, about 10.000 fairykins beside the elves are living in small villages scattered on the edges of the sea of trees.

"I'd like to take you to the world tree, but the high elf hag will be noisy then. When I got close to it back in the day, thunder cloud descended upon me, and half of my top scales were torn. I was in pain for 100 years until it was time for shedding. Therefore Kuro, you too should only get close around here."

I see, so the defense mechanism of the elves can repel dragons huh, amazing. I should contact Mia's parents with [Telephone] and have them come pick us up after we've crossed the mountains.

I sure want to meet a high elf once.

◇

I parted with the black dragon Heiron at the place where we were fighting yesterday.

He didn't need the fang that was broken yesterday since it would grow back in 100 years, so I received it. He doesn't need to put dentures in huh.
Since there are broken pieces of dragon scales when I search around the area of the fight, I collect them all. Although the [Liquor Spring] will seemingly turn into normal water spring after a few days, it's still gushing out liquor now, so I fill the barrels I have in hands with it. I'll send some to elder Dohar and Galhar when we get back to civilization.

I have to clean up one thing first before I get back to Arisa and the others.

Due to the utter rampages of the black dragon Heiron yesterday, monsters and beasts are making great migrations. Due to that, the village of the girl that I've saved from the wolves yesterday is in trouble.

I immediately rush to the sky above the village using Sky Drive.

Bizarre ants are besieging the dwellings that also acts as forts with the acid that can penetrate through the wall of rocks. They're just level 3 monsters, but there are a lot of them. If this keeps up, the village will be overrun in less than a few hours.

They're shouting something, but I don't understand the words.

>[Silga Language Skill Acquired]

I decide to quickly exterminate the ants with [Remote Arrows] since casualties will arise if I do it while being carefree. I finished them all after

five volleys.

I put one point to Silga language skill along the way. Although I'm hearing it in prattle, they seem to be shouting something like angel, or Garleon-sama toward me.
I might be treated like an angel or god because I was shooting magic while floating in the sky. The bizarre ants acid attack was stinky so I didn't lower my altitude much.

This is only a village with 19 people, so it's probably going to be tough cleaning up the bodies of all these ants. While moving like gliding using sky drive, I put them into the [Bizarre Ants] folder in my storage. If I find an area where slimes are growing en masse, let's throw these there.

The village people who have come out are prostrating themselves on the ground.
Thin fumes are coming out of the hands and feet of the prostrating people due to the leftover acid on the ground.

"Face, raise, stand."

The words for conversing are troublesome. I raise skill level to three, enough for everyday conversations.
I heal them with [Aqua Heal] since they're a bit scalded. The elderly are saying, "The pain on my knee has disappeared", and the women "My scars disappeared". However, the voices that say, "My eyes, I can see with my eyes", or "Lila is standing", mixed among it, catch my attention. It's not supposed to be able to heal loss of body parts though?

I'm using [Pure Water] to remove the acid from the water well and the ground while being treated like a god. I don't know how effective it is, but this was the only magic that seemed usable.

The fields have become tragic after getting trampled by the ants, so I leave them with rice and smoked wolf meat as food for the the meantime. I'll leave the recovery of the fields for themselves to take care on their own.

I feel a bit meddlesome, but I also leave them with 10 bottles of diluted potion, and large quantity of medicines for avoiding monsters that have no purpose with me.

"Farewell! Live in good health."

With skill level three, the vocabulary is strange huh.

"God, please your name! Please tell us your name."

Who's a god.
The girl whom I had saved from the wolves before asked for my name. I'm undecided between Nanashi and Kuro, but I guess Nanashi will do. Let's use Kuro exclusively for when I meet some dragon.
I told the girl, "Nanashi", and left that village.

Since there were three villages that looked like they'd be in trouble, I made walls on the surface of the mountain to change the courses of the monsters and the beasts, avoiding the crisis before it happened. I pray that there won't be any monster who climbs over the wall when it sees it.

>Title [Savior] Acquired
>Title [One who is Worshiped] Acquired

I wonder if it's because of the hardships, the airship ark that we are riding crosses the mountain range without any problem and finally arrive at the border of the Bornean Forest.

9-12. Bornean Forest

Satou's here. You can discern those who like to ride amusement park's vehicles and those who don't from their screams. Different people have different suitabilities of course, but perhaps they can enjoy it because they trust those game machines.

◇

After we've crossed the mountain range, the airship ark descends on a narrow grassland between the forest and the foot of a mountain.

"Ah~, it's finally the ground."
"Oh Arisa, wasn't it just half a day long."
"But, I hadn't thought that it would be shaking that much."

What Arisa's saying is true.
There were more strange air currents than I thought, so the shaking was worse than I expected. Thanks to [Canopy] magic, we didn't experience the effect of temperature fall and atmospheric pressure change, but since the [Air Control] couldn't absorb the radical change of the air current, I couldn't prevent the shaking.

"E, earth nanodesu."
"Yes, it's the mother earth."

As the result, Pochi and Liza look a bit pitiful.
They fall down to the ground with a plop. The eyes of the two are a bit unfocused. I didn't shake the ark this time though. Rather, it might've been better if I supported it to prevent the shaking.

Maybe I should had let them sleep like the horses that I gave sleeping medicines.
Arisa and Mia seem like they had motion sickness, they looked a bit

unsteady. I gave them some anti-motion sickness medicine, but it didn't seem to work well.

Nana is operating like usual. Even now, she's poking on a little flower below that's swaying from wind.

Tama seemed like she was really enjoying the unexpected shaking, she was frolic from the beginning to the end that now she's like a child who has just gone to an amusement park, drained of her battery. She's currently sleeping on the grassland with a satisfied smile.

Lulu was afraid and looked like she would get motion sickness, but she screamed, "Kyaa kyaa" as I caught her on my arm like she was riding a jet coaster, she was smiling until the end. I didn't have any objection since her flushed cheeks was cute.

There's still a long time until the nightfall, but since everyone is totally exhausted, I decide to camp here today.

There's no monster in Bornean forest, but there are some on the boundary here. However, there's no particularly strong monster around, so I leave Nana to guard everyone.

I've found the mithril vein I've always yearned for in the mountain range, so I'm going there to mine it. Since the mitrhil vein is quite deep at one kilometer below the ground, I make a shaft until the depth of my goal after using 4-5 [Mud Wall]. I don't know how much will the mithril decrease after refining it, but several tons of it are probably enough. If it's not, I can just come back here.

It's still a while before it's time to prepare for dinner, so I fly around the mountains, gathering things like clays for making earthenwares, stones for building, and rare earth minerals. There are also gold and silver veins, but there are too little gold per square meter area, so I won't touch it. I can just melt old gold coins if I need some.

◇

There's an unexpected guest when I've returned to the camp ground as the sun begins setting.
Even if I said guest, it's not a person. It's an unicorn living in Bornean forest. Unlike the unicorns in Muno forest, it looks like a zebra with its stripes instead of a white horse.

The unicorn and the hornless are getting along well as they eat the horse fodders I've made myself.

"This is?"
"Mutual love."
"Two hours ago, it came wandering about and they began to flirt. Riajuu, or rather RiaJUU, die."
<TLN: The JUU above mean beasts.>
"I won't subjugate or capture it since it's not hostile, but what should we do with it?"

Arisa curses them dejectedly, but please don't pick a quarrel with even unicorns. After telling Liza that she doesn't need to subjugate it, I begin to prepare for dinner together with Lulu.

Tonight I'm making tofu hamburg steak as the main menu per Mia's request. I also make chicken-less chicken rice, potatoes, and custard puddings. I was going to make fried prawns and sausages, but I made fried bamboo shots, and macaronis instead. Finally, I stab the shaped chicken rice with toothpicks adorned with flags, and it's complete.

"You're really diligent~ after characters bento, now it's kid lunches eh."
"Cute."
"Peerless and wonderful~"
"Yes nanodesu! If just hamburg is the strongest, it'll be peerless with this many additions nanodesu!

Pochi has recovered enough to make you think her exhaustion a few hours ago is an illusion. Her tail isn't enough to show it as she's even swinging her arms. I'm glad that she's excited, but she could faint if she's too excited.

"Master."
"What is it?"

Nana is looking at me with eyes that look very dissatisfied. Since Nana seems like she would go on a rampage, I've restrained her with [Magic Hand] ahead of time. It's unfortunate that there's no tactile sensation.

I've made everyone's shares properly this time. Nana also has one of course. I've especially added all three kinds of the flags for Nana's plate. She probably won't rampage now.

"Keen insight. Praising master for having made something truly wondrous."

I'm glad that Nana is also satisfied. Arisa grumbles, "I'm not a kid.", but it seems it's just spoken words.

Since I feel sorry for them if there's no meat, I pile up wyvern karage on another plate. I use wyvern meat that I've pickled with liquor soup since yesterday. I hear Liza is saying, "It's even more delicious than yesterday.", so I'll use seasoning for wyvern meat from now on.

With this kind of menu, it's easy to tell their habits of eating food; Tama starts from her favorite ones, while Pochi and Mia start from their least favorites. Although the food on the large platter are Pochi's favorite too, so she's eating it.

"Satou, delicious."
"Nn."

I reply Mia who's unusually speaking using two words by mimicking her. To Mia who firmly demands another helping, I serve it. Pochi and Tama who

have finished eating earlier after battling for karage with Liza present their plates while saying, "Another~", "Another nanodesu." when they see that scene.

When the big pot that I've prepared with chicken rice becomes empty, everyone is full as they sprawl on the sheet for sleeping while patting their stomaches.

I leave the cleaning up to Liza and Nana as I begin to make a simple electric fan.
Even though we're beyond the mountain range, we shouldn't be located that far to the south, so we've become a bit sweaty, I'm making the fan to make our sleep more pleasant. By the time I realized that I could just use [Air Control] to create some breeze, I had completed the electric fan.

◇

The next day after breakfast, I asked Mia the way to enter Bornean forest, but since she had never gone out of the forest, she didn't know.

Then, I guess I should ask someone who knows.

I search Mia's parents, Lamisauuya, and Lilinatoa from the menu and mark them. Now then, I guess the one I should contact is the mother.

I invoke [Telephone] magic with Lilinatoa as the target. This magic won't be properly invoked if the other party doesn't want to talk. It's good that it can't be used to attack with prank calls.

"Who?"

The reply is a voice that sounds exactly like Mia's. Only I can hear this voice. It's certain since I've tested it with Lulu and Pochi before.

"Pleased to meet you, I'm Satou, a human. I'm sorry for calling you with magic--"

Right at then, Lilinatoa-san's voice cuts in.

"My! Satou-san you said?! Are you the one Dohar's mentioned? That's right isn't it! Then, perhaps you've brought Mia along? You've brought her right? --"

She's talking like a machine gun, just like Mia is when she's drunk.
I'm made to listen to her for five minutes straight without any chance to talk back. Looks like they know my name from Dohar-san's message. I'm glad the words that Mia's said in the dwarven hometown like "Mutual love", or "Eloping", aren't taken seriously by them.

In contrast, the letter from Seryuu city's manager-san, Yusalatoya, hasn't arrived yet. It seems Dohar-san employed magic transmission which made his message arrived first.

They're going to pick us, but they don't know our position, so I shoot a fireball to the sky as a signal.

A little while after the fireball has disappeared, two elves appear from the forest that has been divided in front of us.
They're wearing green clothes like the elves in the picture books.

""Mia""
"Laya, Lia"

Parents and child who call each other with their names are hugging.
Really, this is quite a moving scene.

Arisa is pulling the sleeves of me who's being moved as I watch the reunion.
What? Even though it's at the good part?

"Hey, they're Mia's parents right?"

"That's right."
"But you know~"

I understand what Arisa is trying to say.
Mia's parents look like they're only slightly older than Mia, they look younger even compared to Lulu. They seem to be a race who grow slowly, Hayato will be delighted.
The father's face looks exactly like the elf manager-san at Seryuu city. They might be blood-related, their population is few after all.

"Satou."
"Thank you."
"My, Satou-san right? You're Satou-san aren't you. You're younger than I thought? You're young aren't you--"

I greet the parents whom Mia introduces.
Nevertheless, the father seems like a taciturn person like Mia. There's no middle way between this couple, it's really hard to talk with them.

We're going to enter the Elves' hometown as we're invited by Mia's parent.

9-13. Bornean Forest (2)

Satou's here. In anime and manga, I've seen a lot of scenes where the character mistakes the mother for the child, but I've never encountered it in reality. You can't deceive the wrinkles and the skin gloss after all.
However, in a different world with long life species, it seems to be a relatively common scene.

◇

"■■ ■·····■ ■ ■ ■■■■■ Forest Maiden Summon (Summon Dryad)"

Mia father sure is fluent when he's chanting.
His summon calls out a little girl with bare skin and long green hair that appears from the trunk of a tree. She looks exactly like the dryad near the maze of Trazayuya. Since she's level 30, she's probably a different one.

However, the dryad talks to me candidly when our eyes meet.

"Boy! It's been awhile."
"Are you perhaps the dryad I've met on the withered mountain?"

If that's true, she's leveled up very fast.

"I guess you could say that, or not like that at all. This body's status will change depending on the tree used as the cost, but the inside is the same."

Is it something similar to how the running software is the same even though the PCs are different?

"Dryad."
"Wait a minute."

Mia's father calls the dryad, but she treats him irresponsibly, and gives priority to talking with me. Oh? She can defy her summoner huh.
The dryad floats a bit above the ground, clings her arms on my neck, and presses her body. Your face is close. Close I said.
I push back the body of the dryad who's being overly close.

"That time was delicious. I want to taste it again."
"W, wait, are you cheating? You're cheating right!"
"M, master."
"Mwuu."

The dryad most likely deliberately leaves out the word, "Mana", and Arisa who's heard it approaches me while howling, "Ugaa."
Even though it's groundless, Lulu looks at me while looking very sad, and Mia who's hiding behind is scratching my back.

That dryad goes under my armpit as if peeking to see Mia's face.

"Oh~? Oh oh oh~? The one over there is baby-chan right?"
"You're mistaken."
"I'm not you know~? It's about time you pay the compensation I wonder~?"

The dryad chases Mia like a cat who has found the rat. Please stop running in circle around me you two. You'll soon become like melted butter y'know?
Even Mia's parent begin to question her when they heard 'compensation' word from Dryad.

"Mia!"
"Wait, Mia! Don't tell me you asked something from dryad? You did didn't you? Even though I've warned you so much! I've warned you right? --"
"Mwuu, emergency."

While Mia's mother is having a long talk, Liza is supplementing, and it seems that Mia had borrowed the dryad's power for making a shortcut on the forest during the Muno city incident. Mia's mother tries to negotiate with the dryad,

but it seem they're not reaching an agreement.
As it is now, the dryad will suck Mia's mana and life force, turning her dry. I don't want to see that.

"Dryad, is mana fine as the compensation?"
"Of course, it's alright~ I'm only going to drain the stamina since the mana isn't enough. If it's the boy's mana, I will gladly take it."
"I understand. Then you can absorb it."

When the dryad is coming for my lips, the voices of Mia's parents and Arisa stop her.

"Wait."
"That's right, wait Satou-san. Dryad is a glutton, she can eat no matter how much you know? She will absorb, sip sip. Do you want to become dried thing even though you're so young? You don't do you--"
"Gyaa, nonono! Those lips are mineee~~~"
"Mwuu."

My lips are mine.
Mia thrusts herself between the dryad and me. It looks like she's trying to protect me, but looking at her trembling body, she seems to fear the dryad's going to drain her.

I ask the dryad a question while slowly avoiding Mia's side.

"Dryad, can you absorb besides from the lips?"
"I can you know? You like the lewd one better?"

The instant Arisa hears dryad's "lewd", she's boiling. Since the talk didn't progress, I quickly blocked her mouth with my hand.

"Without the lewd one."
"Then, how about I drain it by kissing on above your heart?"

When I picture it, it looks like a crime, but it's alright if it's just that I guess.

I take off the knight-style coat and my shirt. I feel that Arisa and Lulu are staring at me, but it's probably just my imagination. Why would they look now when I've always changed clothes beside them.

Since Mia's parents are worried, I tell them that I've transfered my mana to the dryad once before, putting them at ease.

"Then, thanks for the me~al."

Mia's parents are right to describe her as a [Glutton].
My mana are being drained at an amazing rate. Due to me having mana sensing now unlike before, I understand the flow of mana. Moreover, since I've grown accustomed with mana operation, I understand that the dryad is adjusting the flow of the flowing mana to eliminate the waste. In fact, I feel that the efficiency of the dryad's absorption has improved compared to when she started to drain.
It seems the mana that the dryad has drained go toward the forest, it's spreading through the roots of all kinds of trees.

However, just how much she's going to drain.
I feel that she'll really drain it all if I leave her alone, so I stop her when she's drained 1500MP in total.

"Aahn, more."
"Stuff it."

All the trees around the surrounding have become in full bloom. Depending on the type of the trees, there are also some which have its branches bending due to the fruits that have ripened. They shouldn't have been there just now. There are no overgrown weeds, I wonder if the dryad has controlled it.

"Well~ It's been awhile since I eat this much. Just say if you want some helps in the forest. I'll save you 2-3 times for free."
"Thanks for that."

I'd have liked her help with the weeds highway.

>Title [Guest of the Forest] Acquired
>Title [Lover of the Forest Maiden] Acquired

Who's the lover of whom.

◇

I leave Lulu to wipe my breast with a wet towel, though it's not like it's dirty. You don't have to rub it so strongly you know? Although I think so, I'm not saying anything since I'm overawed by Lulu's serious expression.
Nana was going to imitate the dryad, but Arisa stopped her. That's rare, usually it's Arisa who would to try to imitate such thing.

Looks like Mia's and Mia's parent's surprised expressions have settled when I've finished wearing clothes.
I thought Pochi and Tama were quiet since a while ago, turned out they were being held on Liza's armpits while she put her hands on their mouths. Since they ask for help with their glances, I tell Liza to release them.

"The gate."
"Right, right, I've forgotten haven't I. It's only for a bit you know? You've called the dryad in order to create the road to Bornean hometown. Isn't it?"
"That's right."
"Understoo~d. Forest Lead (Alf Road)."

With Mia's father's urge, the dryad uses a magic.
A road has opened between the forest, countless firefly lights appear from the ground, and the space is dyed with the golden color from it.

It's quite beautiful.

"Now, go~ It won't open for long."
"Let's go."

We tread upon the golden road with the guidance of Mia's father.

>[Forest Magic Skill Acquired]

Looks like it's a road made in subspace as the map only shows, [Area without Map].

"You can't look back okay~ you would become a lost child."

Please don't say such thing from behind. Pochi and Tama catch my hands, looking uneasy. Forbidden from looking behind, it's like Orpheus' and Izanagi's road to hell huh.
Later, I learned that looking behind was no problem. However, you could stray off the path if you do, thus they warned so.

When we come out of the road, we are near the center of Bornean forest.

◇

"Fuhaaa, TRU-LY, a town where elf lives right!"

Usually I would have stopped Arisa's shrieks, but it's impossible this time.

Houses where people lives made in the interior of gigantic trees are spread in front of our eyes. There's a fountain made from blue crystal in geometrical shape at the center of the open space, and around that fountain, small palm-sized fairies, and pixies are flying.

Since Nana has begun to walk there unsteadily when she sees the pixies, I exchange looks with Liza and pin her together from both sides.

The tree houses are built around the water fountain as the center. One of the houses can be as big as a 20-story building. Passages made from ivies and

leaves are hung between the tree houses, connecting them.

I can see a super gigantic tree veiled between clouds behind those houses.

That is the world tree.
The bottom of the tree is properly of trees and shrubs. I'm glad, it's not really something like an orbital elevator.

The elves who are appearing from the tree houses are calling Mia's name while waving their hands. Mia waves her hand back while she faithfully calls each of their names. The corners of her eyes have become slightly moist.

Welcome home, Mia.

9-14. Mia's Secret

Satou's here. During the times when food allergy was a minor problem, looking for things that can be eaten seemed to be hard. Even longer ago, there was also time where people that were very picky with their food were stopped being treated like humans.
I wonder if food allergy exist in the other world...

◇

"Sweet melons~?"
"Lots are growing nodesu!"
"Pochi, Tama. They're fruits the elves have raised, so you can't take them without permissions okay."

Those are on the trees around Mia's houses that create the spiral staircase we're currently climbing. Pochi and Tama are in high spirits when they see the sweet melons and crimson oranges grown along the way.

"Nn."

Mia plucks one of the fruit, cuts it into two with a knife, and gives them to Pochi and Tama.

"When you're hungry, you can pluck and eat them as you like you know? You don't need to be reserved--"

I see, rather than being raised by someone, it might be more like ginkgo trees on the roadside.

Or so I've thought, not only on the trees along the roadside, but fruits and flowers are growing even inside the houses. I think the sunlight don't reach to the inside, how are they growing them.

We're guided to a big living room with very tall ceiling.
We leave Mia behind who's being jostled, and head toward the room with a table that looks like a tree stump guided by Mia's parents.
When Mia's father says, "Chairs", ivies rise from the ground to become chairs. This is quite fantasy-like.

When Mia's father snaps his fingers, some pixies bring several goblets and line them up on the table.
Mia's father snaps his fingers once again, and this time pitcher plant-like plants descend from above which then pour transparent liquid with sweet smell into the goblets.

Is it fine to drink this?
But, Pochi and Tama drink them without hesitation and raise voices of praises. Is that so, it's tasty huh.

We were captivated with the fantasy scenes that was unfolding in front of our eyes that we neglected to monitor one dangerous person.

We notice that after we've heard small voices of protests.

'"Let go of me."'
'"Hey you, let go."'
'"Halp, Laya, halp."'

When I turn around, there are three pixies who have been caught by Nana begging for Mia's father help with faces that are about to cry. Nana is holding two of them on both her hands, while the last one is outrageously crammed on her breasts. Change with me.

Mia's father keeps staring at the pixie who's struggling on Nana's cleavage, not helping them. Since my eyes meet with Mia's father's somehow, we nod.

Ow.
Arisa beats my head from behind. The pixies seem to have been rescued by

Lulu.

"Good grief, you oppai planet people."
"That's a misunderstanding."
"Nn, misunderstanding."

I avert my face from the condemning looks of Arisa and Lulu, and instead, drift my view to Mia who's being jostled. Elves are all slender after all huh. It seems there's no chubby elf. Either partially, or wholly.

◇

"'Geez, ya' gone and done it now.'"
"'That was bothersome.'"
"'Here, cozy.'"

For some reason, the pixies who have ran away from Nana are nesting on my head and shoulders. The one who's said peeved remark is pulling my hair while saying that. Since it's painful in itself, I put them on the table with my hands.

Pochi splits some baked sweets and feed it to the complaining pixies.

"'Ou! This is some good stuff.'"
"'It's true.'"
"'More, give me.'"

The crumbs from the baked sweets are spilling, but I guess I can just use life magic later.
The pixies from the town have gathered due to the praising voices of the pixies here.

"'Hey, give me?'"
"'Won't you, give me too?'"

"Au, au, wait nanodesu, there's, there's no more nodesu."

The pixies are talking in elf language so their words shouldn't connect, but somehow the conversations are established.
It's fun to look at panicking Pochi, but let's send her a lifeboat.

I take out a basket full of baked sweets through Item Box onto the table.

The pixies attack the baked sweets in high spirits.

...Uwah.
They're too vigorous that there are those who bury themselves on the basket showing only their legs, and there are also some who are falling from the table on the opposite side while carrying the sweets.

The elves who are coming with Mia seem to be interested with the baked sweets too, I've already lined up two basket of sweets on the table.

"Yum." "Umu." "Good." "Delicious."

They generally talk in short speech like Mia, but there are also some who talk long, although not as bad as Mia's mother.

"My, it's delicious. Really delicious. Hey, hey, are these made by Satou-san? It's not, is it?"
"It's true, this is delicious."
"Hey, although it's different from honey, the sweetness is wonderful isn't it."

Most of the elves are friendly, but not all of them it seems.
One elf boy points at me while glaring in front of me.

"Mutual love?"

Who with whom?
Mia clings on my neck from behind, and show it to the boy. "Of course!", she said, but I think that's groundless.

I understand that he has problems from his expression, but please tell that to the person in question.

Apparently, that boy likes Mia. Although I've been referring him as a boy, he looks like Mia's father. He's also 250 years old, so he's quite older than Mia.

"What's good about him?"
"Beautiful."

Ha? Beautiful?
The reply for the boy's question is incomprehensible. In fact, the elves around us are looking puzzled too.

"'Beautifull.'" "'Yup, it's beautiful.'" "'Isn't it.'"

Some pixies are agreeing with Mia.
The eyes color of Mia's mother who's tilting her neck in puzzlement change from blue to silver and then she looks at me.

"My, oh Mia! It's certainly beautiful, I've never seen this before. I wonder how many spirits are there, it's hard to see since there are too many of them, but it's a beautiful light."
"It's true."
"You're well liked by the spirits."

The people who call me beautiful have the [Spirit Seer] skill in common.
Apparently, spirits are gathering around me. Looks like I'm letting out an aura called Spirit Light that the spirits like, and it looks beautiful.
They tell me that it's rare for spirits to gather besides on place where the earth vein is gushing out.

The reason why Mia can find me wherever I am seems to be this mass of spirits that act as a landmark.

◇

There was another secret of Mia that had become clear.

It's about meat.

"My, oh Mia! You won't become an adult if you're picky with food you know? Now, don't avoid it, eat the meat. You'll eat it right?"
"Mwuu, unnecessary."
"Eat."

Mia is sandwiched between her parents as they tell her to eat meat.
It was our misunderstanding that elves couldn't eat meat. In truth, other elves eat meat dishes just fine.
They're not like Liza who regards meat as supreme, but among them, there's no one who only eats vegetables.

I understand from seeing Mia that elves are relatively hearty eaters, so I go with Lulu to help elf madams to prepare the meal. I let the madams to taste the whale karage and kabayaki from yesterday, and after I get the OK, the mass production begins.

There are some cookwares with quite bad taste like stoves with a person face design, but it seems they're basically some kinds of magic tools. All the cookwares here are organic-like.

The difference with humans magic tools are how they don't need to consume mana of the person using them. The stove lights up when I just breath on it, and the oven heats up when I just knock it. Water comes out of the fish mouth-shaped faucet when I just hold my hands before it.

I'll ask the elves about the mechanisms later.

I serve the mass produced whale karage, fried rice and skewers on the platter. Elves who have come to help, and simple Pinocchio-like living dolls carry the plates to the banquet hall.

While I soothe myself as I look at the competition between Liza who's guarding the [Mountain of Karaage] like an impregnable fortress against Pochi, Tama and the pixies, I go out to the terrace and gaze at the town scape. I listen to the song that the elves are playing while putting the cherry-like fruit that the pixies have given me in my mouth.

"Satou."
"What's wrong Mia. Is it fine for the guest of honor to leave her seat?"
"Nn."

Mia leads me by hand as we walk the town of the elves.
Everyone seem to have gone to the banquet, there are only living dolls, and carriages without the auto-motion horses around.

And then, the place where Mia leads me to is--

9-15. Secret of Boruenan

Satou's here. When I went to the Huis Ten Bosch in Sasebo, I was surprised with the overflowing exotic atmosphere of that theme park. I was slightly shocked when I happened to catch a sight of the women who had been wearing Holland national costumes in the daytime wearing t-shirts and jeans at the pub during the night.

◇

How far are we going?

"Just ahead."

While looking at the town scape that the elves have adapted naturally, I follow Mia from behind.

"Here."

Mia is beckoning from an open space that's encircled with multi-colored mushrooms. There are two layers of the circles.
The AR indicates that it's called [Fairy Ring].

"What is this?"
"Ring."

Is this a place for holding some kind of ceremony? Let's pray that it has nothing to do with something like marriage.

"Teleport (Relocate)."

With Mia's signal, the two mushrooms rings are flashing reciprocally. I don't know where we're teleporting to, but since it's Mia who's doing it, it shouldn't be anything bad.

As the rate of the blinking light rise, intense light burst out from the floor. When the reciprocal blinking ends, the teleport begins.

The next moment, we're on top of a hill that overlook a town with systematically built bungalows.
When I look up, there's transparent canopy supported by what seem to be tree branches. The size is such that it covers the entire town.

It's underground huh?

"The true town."

Mia parts her hand, and goes toward a place slightly away that looks like a tram platform. There's <<Floating Boards>> of nature magic floating at that station-like place. The boards are transparent, but they have color so it's probably different than the one from nature magic.
A bit later after we arrive at the platform, a young man who's riding the board arrives. His appearance looks like a boy, but since he has beard that doesn't suit him, he should be a young man. M, my past trauma-- It's fine even if it doesn't suit him isn't it.

"Welcome back, Mia. You've already brought him haven't you? Heya, I'm Tsutoleiya. Please call me Tsuya. I had studied in humans country about 100 years ago."

That young man candidly speaks to me.
According to him, the place where we've been just now is something that's been built to look like a [Genuine] elf town play for visitors.

That said, the elves are not doing it out of ill-will, it's all for entertaining guests. I am told that the Saga hero from 400 years ago, who had grown tired of fighting and lived here for the rest of the hero's life, made it.

Since the young man's story is long, the sulking Mia pulls my sleeves, and so I promise the young man to meet again and leave that place.

Mia skillfully jumps over the place that looks like a platform. The board floats back to its former height after sinking a bit. I jump to the board beside her board as she's advised. The board receives series of number that seem to be house number she's announced, and it starts running. Even though I don't say anything to the board I'm riding, it follows after her afterward.

Every house is about 200 tsubo wide with walls that look like they're made from white resin-like material, and slates roofs. The walls are overran with ivies though so I can see the color only slightly. The houses are divided not with fences, but with hedges and flower beds. If I have to say, the flower beds seem to be more dominant.
<TLN: Tsubo=
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_units_of_measurement#Area >

However, there's no one here.
I wonder if everyone is participating the banquet at the town above?

The boards we're riding at 20 Km/H flies through the town as if gliding. The road is asphalt, or rather it looks like tennis court's ground, or rather it's made from pebbles that look like small light brown beads put together.
I asked Mia about it, but since she didn't seem like she had interest with it, she replied, "Don't know". Let's ask that seemingly well-informed young man if I meet him again.

And then, we're stopping slowly in front of a house. The boards gently descend to the ground, and disappear into it as if sucked.

◇

The house where Mia leads me to looks more like a modern building than a fantasy one.
What makes me think that is quickly apparent.

It's the windows.

Windows in this world are relatively small, all of them are holes made from woods for the purpose of ventilations or lighting.

However, Mia's house before me are adorned with big glass windows and glass doors with high degree of transparency. Back at the duchy capital, there were some mansions that used oak glass for windows, but there were none that used them as many as this, and most were fixed fittings. Since the ones here are fitted on windows frames that have rails, they probably can be slided for opening and closing like on modern constructions.

When Mia touch the front door, I can hear a sound like air escaping, and the automatic door opens. After I enter as leads by her, the automatic door closes behind. This is quite SF sthick. Might as well have multi-layered airlock doors, probably would have been more interesting.

The ceiling on the corridor is transparent, and the light of the sun from beyond the canopy shines here.
Yet, the light is gentle since it has penetrated two layers of glasses.

Mia leads me by hands as we walk through the corridor.
As expected, seems there's no magical structures on the corridor.

"Here."

It seems that this is Mia's room.
There are one bed and one desk. Dolls with the shape of penguin-like deformed birds are lined up in the fixed-fitting shelf beside the bed. The room is generally dyed in pink color. There's nothing like houseplants.

So she wanted to show me her room.
How do I say this, it looks like the room of a junior high school girl from modern time.

"Don't look."

Mia enters a clothing room that looks like a walk-in closet.
I won't peep even if you don't say it.

Since it's become quiet, I use [Telephone] magic to contact Arisa.

"Yesh, the common Arisa-chanspeaking~."
"Sorry, wrong number."

Since Arisa is clearly drunk judging from her words, I cancel the [Telephone] magic. This time I invoke [Telephone] toward Liza, but there's no reply. Looks like she's sleeping. It connects to Mia's mother in the end, so I tell her that I'm visiting her house.

That day I accompanied Mia on her fashion show until late at night. Genuine elf native dress complete with green tricorne, one-piece-like clothes, and three-quarter length pants with short skirt, there were plenty more variations than I had thought.

I put Mia, who had become sleepy after she was tired, on the bed and let her sleep, and then I also slept together beside her.

As for my excuse, it was because I was tired from the confrontation with the black dragon, and the all-night drinking bout yesterday.

I fell deep in sleep like mud without even dreaming.

◇

"Guilty, or not guilty!"
"Guilty~"
"Guilty, nano desu!"
"Master, guilty desu."

Before my eyes who has woken up, there are Arisa who's lifting the corners

of her eyes, Pochi and Tama who are happily diving to the bed, and Lulu who looks like she's about to cry. Nana and Liza are here too, but the two keep silence. No, Nana steps forward and put a hand toward Arisa.

"Arisa. The lower official me will advocate for master."

Oh, a defense lawyer has appeared.
No wait, I'm innocent in the first place.

"What, does Nana approve affair?"
"Arisa, listen well."
"Go on and say it."

Arisa edges back slightly from Nana who presses on calmly.
I wonder why, I can't help but feel that Nana will say some unnecessary things.

"Master and Mia are from different races. Descendants will not born even if they try to mate. Therefore, it is not affair."

Nana is making a proud expression that I haven't seen for awhile, but as expected, her advocacy is off-the-mark. And, didn't she imply that I've done the mistake with Mia?

"Mia!"

Uwa, Mia's father has come.

"Ara ara, you're getting along well."
"Nn, mutual love."

Like I said, there's no romance.
Mia's mother seems to have understood while enjoying the scene, but Mia's father is misunderstanding it.

Mia's father misunderstanding wasn't cleared until after Mia's mother

assisted. No, rather than clearing the misunderstanding, I feel that it's left hanging after the machine gun talks of Mia's mother drowned it.

Mia's mother gets down to business after she has talked aplenty.
You should have cut in faster if you have business.

"Now then, Satou-san, we'd like to hear about what happen with Mia step by step, so would you be willing to meet with the elders council?"

I may be able to meet the rumored high elf.
Looking at the elves here, I can't expect dynamite body, but since normally I shouldn't have been able to meet them, I'm slightly looking forward to it.

9-16. High Elf

Satou's here. There's this phrase, 'clumsy beauty', but I think that's more favorable than a perfect beauty. Although, they only exist behind the TV or the net in my former world.

◇

The elder council hall that Mia's father has lead me to is located inside a block of the world tree, deep in the Boruenan forest.

We came over from the [Fairy Rings] on the underground town-like place at the surface town. I don't really know since Mia's father is too silent, but probably the block can only be entered via teleportation.

Of course, I had used [All Map Exploration] when I entered this block, but it couldn't map the layer above certain stratum, and the lowermost layer, maybe because they were in different blocks. Or maybe, there is some kind of system that can resist [All Map Exploration].

What I can gather from the known map is that this block is about five kilometers deep underground. I don't remember the thickness of earth's crust, but isn't this quite deep? The roots of world tree expands to the outside of the block structures, and even outside the edges of the whole Boruenan forest. The place with Mia's house yesterday is about 10 kilometers away from the this world tree block. I've mistakenly thought that it was quite close because the world tree is too bizarrely big.

Going back to the topic, there are a lot of elves in this world tree block. There are about ten times as many as the elves above. However, nearly everyone has [Sleeping] status. They're comparatively high leveled and older than the surface elves. Some of the younger elves are around one millennium old, but most of them are more than ten thousands years old. However, in contrast to their long life, there isn't any elf who is beyond level 50.

I'd like to hear just what kind of circumstances that the sleeping elves have, but I'm not asking Mia's father since he will likely retort back with, "How did you know?"

Now then, as for the long-awaited high elves, there are only eight of them. Moreover, seven of them are in [Sleeping] states like the other elves. The high elves are around level 50-70. Their longevities are wondrous even compared to the elves.

And, the only awake high elf is waiting in the elder council hall ahead.

I arrive at the destination while checking the world tree block like such.
The boards that I've been riding disappears as it's sucked into the ground. The door in front of me is a three meters wide octagonal wood door. The corridors I'm coming from so far are all made of resin, it seems only the ones here are different.
The door opens like an automatic door when Mia's father takes a step forward. It opens by splitting to the left and right, and then there is another thin door immediately inside, that then opens by splitting to the top and bottom.
There's a 20 meters long passage inside with another door structure like just now at the end. It's like an air lock.

"Satou."

Oops, I've been thinking the structure of the automatic door too much.
I quickly go toward Mia's father who has entered the room earlier and is calling me.

◇

"Satou of Shiga kingdom. We wish to express our gratitudes for your assistance."

"Satou of Shiga kingdom. We won't forget the favor of saving the baby from the wicked magician."
"Satou of Shiga kingdom. We want to repay you for bringing back the baby to us from the distant land."
"Satou of Shiga kingdom. You have--"

This here is an auditorium with an open space that looks like it can hold more than 1000 people inside.
There are around 20 dignitaries of the elder council who are sitting on the front row inside.

And one by one, they're saying thank you for having brought Mia back, but why are they using, "Satou of Shiga kingdom" at the beginning of the sentences. I wonder if that kind of phrase is a rule. They seem to know the fact that I understand elf language as they speak in elf language.

These elders look about as young as Mia's father.

However, their eyes are different.

How do I say this, their eyes look like aged turtles, calm, or rather stillness that are bordering on apathy. If you look closer, their eyes are steadily immobile as if they're about to doze off. As expected of people who have lived thousands of years. I'd like to get along with them and listen to their tales from ages past.

However, even though the black dragon Heiron is far older than these elder elves, I feel that he's much younger than them. I'm interested if this is due to the racial difference, or individual difference.

And then, as if waiting for when everyone has finished saying their thanks, the thick curtain on the interior of the room rises, and then people come out while riding on the only light board in the room.

The long-awaited high elf-san is on the center of that board, and four elves miko-san are standing on all four sides as if protecting the high elf.

These four miko-san aren't wearing western style miko outfits like Sera and the others in the duchy capital, but Japanese-styles clothes. And it's even the miko clothing with excessive ornaments that's usually used during Kagura dances. Miko has to wear white quilt silk garment with red hakama after all.

Unfortunately, I still can't see the high elf.
That's because bamboo blinds immediately float between the four standing miko elves-san. Yes, they're floating. There is no props, and the miko-san aren't holding them either. It's probably magic.

The light board that the high elf-san and the elves are riding passes through between the elders, and stops before me.

""""""Be silent~""""""

The scepters of miko-san rung matching to their voices.
No one was talking, but it would be boorish of me to retort that.

""""""Holy tree-sama will honorably speak.""""""

The high elf-san is called holy tree huh. Since her real name is Aialize, I wonder if holy tree is her nickname or an abbreviation of her position. From the AR, her title is [Pure Maiden], and her occupation is [World Tree: Ground Administrator].

The bamboo blinds that are hiding her smoothly open, and the high elf shows up.

Another little girl huh.

The one beyond the bamboo blinds is a little girl who's even younger than Arisa of around 5-8 years old. Her face looks a bit like Mia, but with her silver hair and red eyes, she's a bit different than other elves who have green hair and green eyes. Out of curiosity, I tried verifying her age, but I couldn't. This is the first time I've seen age with hundreds of millions units. I felt dizzy when I was halfway counting the digits.

However, her appearance is that of a little girl huh.

"Satou of Shiga kingdom. You've done well escorting Misanalia back to Boruenan forest, noja."

Hmm?

"Wacchi? Wa, thank you very much, noja."
<TLN: 'Wacchi' is cutesy form of 'washi', which means 'I', used mostly by elderly.>

I wonder why I feel that her way of speaking isn't natural.
She was speaking fluently halfway through it, but her words clogged when she was about to call herself, and she ended up speaking in monotone. When her word was fluent, her voice was calm and gentle, but when it was clogging, it became like some strange anime voice. It's like when a person who isn't a voice actress tries to mimic one.

The elders are steadfast like always even when they see such high elf. But, although I can't see the faces of the four miko-san since they're covering it, their shoulders are trembling.

"What's wrong, ka ya?"

The little girl tilts her head to one side.

I've noticed that illusions don't work on me ever since I saw through Pochi's human form at Muno city back then.

I can see the figure of a woman in her 20s who's sitting, overlapping the standing little girl. Blue eyes and light blond hair, thin lips and nose that isn't too high, even though it's not at Lulu's degree, she's a beautiful woman without a doubt. It's hard to make out her body due to her white silk garment and miko shirt (chihaya), but her breasts look to be about C cup. I don't know her height since she's sitting, but I'm guessing it's around mine.

Nice, truly nice!
You have to meet such beauty in the other world or else it's not enough after all. Ah, I'm glad that I visit Boruenan forest.

"What do you wish for--rewards, noja?"

The little illusion girl pridefully says so full of confidence, but the real girl has her face a bit red.
It seems she's not doing this farce out of her own will. I'm slightly charmed at her timid troubled expression.

"Then, Satou of Shiga kingdom. I shall grant you a kiss as your reward, noja."

Oops, I didn't listen to the beginning and the end of the talk.
I see an illusion of the little girl spreading her arm and pushing her lips that become like an octopus' forward. The real form of the beauty seems to be embarrassed as she's closed her eyes.

I would have immediately declined if it was a kiss from a little girl, but there's no way I refuse if it's from such beauty.

Mia is also readily willing to kiss, so it must be like how Western people treat it like a greeting.

I step forward as if gliding through the ground, spontaneously put my hands on the beauty's cheeks, and lightly kiss her. I actually want to kiss the lips, but she's still the representative of elf hometown, so I restrain myself.
I've gotten used to the kiss on the forehead after I helped Mia, so I kiss the high elf on her forehead.

Since there's no reaction I drop my gaze, the high elf has fainted with red face that looks like a boiled octopus. She seemed to have been so stunned she fainted.

Perhaps, it was bad?

◇

"Lua, give me water please."

The beauty-san who's sleeping on a bed that's shining transparent light, the high elf Aialize-san rises while being half-asleep.

Lua-san who has been waiting for Aialize-san to wake up together with me gives her some water poured from the pitcher. The water cup looks like it's made of glass, but it feels like plastic, such mysterious material. The AR says that it's called Alua Goblet. Alua is probably the material's name.

"Uu, what Daisaku's said must be a mistake. He said that high elf appears as a silver haired girl who uses [Noja] end word."
"Aze-sama."

Lua-san is trying to tell her that I'm here, but since she's frantically talking to herself, she doesn't notice me at all.
Daisaku-san is the hero from 400 years ago who has created the town back I guess?

"I know already, you're telling me not to speak ill of the deceased right?"
"Aze-sama."

Aialize-san is pouting with inflated cheeks like Mia.
That's cute.

"Mou, isn't it alright just for a bit. He must be thinking that I'm a weird woman. Even though he's the benefactor who has saved Mia, I wonder if he thinks that elf hometown is the worst now."
"Aze-sama."

That can't be helped. It is weird after all.

"Even though I went to the surface town to tell Mia [Welcome back] yesterday, she wasn't there. That's right, that Arisa girl was also saying, [High elf has to be silver haired little girl, it's the basic.], or, [Master will definitely refuse if he's given a kiss from a little girl as a reward.], but it's totally different."
"Aze-sama."

I see, so Arisa took part in this too.

"Mou, this is why I can't let my guard down against Japanese people. They're treating people like toys since a long time ago."
"Aze-sama."

There should be several Japanese people from successive generations, but maybe she's only ever met people like Arisa? There should be normal one like me among them, what an unlucky person she is.
However, she knows that Arisa is a Japanese huh? She probably notices it from the purple hair. I had put on a blond hair wig on Arisa.

"Mou, Lua, what is it."

Lua-san points her finger with a little gesture at me.
I thought that it would be a problem to let a man enter her room, but since Lua-san didn't mind, I followed along. I don't really understand the hierarchy of this elf hometown. I guess it's more like democracy than monarchy. Or rather, it should be more like a big family.

Aialize-san turns her head mechanically like an unoiled tin doll.

Our eyes meet.

Aialize-san becomes flustered while going, 'au au'.
She's a clumsy person, but let's send her a life boat here. Feel like she'd think bad of me like Arisa otherwise.

"I've heard from Lua-san that you've been in fever since morning. I'm sorry that you had to overdo it for my sake."
"That's right Aialize-sama. Your fever still hasn't subsided, so please get some rest without overworking yourself today."

I quickly make eyes contact to Lua-san.
She's quickly ridden on my made-up story, [Her odd behaviors were because of her high fever that made her hazy.]

After Aialize-san had calmed down, I made a promise with Lua-san to visit them again, and decided to go back. According to Lua-san, seems that they have something to talk about. I feel that it's something troublesome, but it's fine just hearing it right.

When I returned to Mia's house, I was somehow told to [Seiza].
The leak doesn't seem to come from Mia's father. Behind Arisa and Mia, three of the miko are eating baked sweets while laughing happily. I'll slip in some extremely spicy cookies next time.

9-17. Daily Life of the Elves

Satou's here. I have often failed in game developments by only being able to imitate the outward appearance (of other game) without actually understanding the structure. I think you have to understand the structure if you want to develop and put it into practical use.
However, there are also some rare people who jump over the understanding and create new ideas. That's what you call genius huh~

◇

""""HEY BOY, there's a visitor for ya""""

Suddenly, several masks hanging on the wall were talking at the same time. Tama seems to have been completely surprised as she puts down the gomoku stone, curls her body, and raises her tail. Pochi also almost fell from her chair, but she survived thanks to Liza who supported her from where she was sitting beside her.

These masks seem to be something like intercoms. It wasn't working yesterday, so there must be someone who activated them last night. It might be the mischievous leprechauns that Tama's talked about.
I thought that the masks hanging on the wall would project the visitor's figure like a monitor, but it seems there's no function like that.

When I stand up the masks stop talking.

"I'll go see the visitor."

Lulu goes downstairs in pitter-patter to meet the visitors.
We're currently staying in the tree house that we visited on the first day. We were invited to stay in Mia's house underground, but since I didn't want to intrude upon the reunion of parents and child, we stayed here instead.

It's already been five days since we arrive at the elves hometown.

There was no need for us to stay for long since we had finished the goal of escorting Mia back home, but since we were here already I wanted to tour the elves hometown, and they easily agreed to it when I asked. Rather, they reacted with, "What are you saying? Of course you will stay here for a while right?" Elves perceive time differently than humans more than I've thought, by [For a while] they seem to mean several years.

I've planned to stay for half a month at the longest, but I'm worried being rude if we leave too fast.

"Master, Nea-san has come bringing the dishes that she's talked yesterday."

Nea-san is a 500 years old mrs elf. Her hobby is cooking, and trying to bring back the dishes that the hero Daisaku's left behind seems to be her life work. As I'm told, the hero Daisaku couldn't cook so he only orally imparted the ambiances of the dishes. She said that she couldn't reproduce it well.

Today we're going to feast on Nea-style hamburg steaks.
"Grilled kneaded meat dish" is the only information she's learned from the words left behind by the hero.

Nea-san proudly lines up five dishes on the table.
Meatball like small balls, roasted meat pasta, noddles meat that are knitted in koban-size and grilled, something that looks like nothing but a lump of meat, and the last one looks like a hamburg steak from the outside, they're on the plates that are lined on the table.

"Beside this one, nothing look like a hamburg steak, but they're delicious without a doubt."
"Yup, that's true. Particularly this second type, the Nea-style pasta, and the third type, the knitted noddles, they're tasty."

They're not hamburg steak, but I've never seen such dishes on earth. I guess it's like the dishes in the shop of a creative chef.

The reason why the Nea-style hamburg steak isn't like the real one is because it's only made from meat. Since Nea-san said that it was, "100% beef", there seems to be some problem from what the hero Daisaku's conveyed.

It's easy for a hamburg steak to become dried out, if it's only composed of meat, but it seems she's done something about it after several hundreds years of trials and errors. How patient. If asked, it would seem that she had created many derivations. I'll ask her to teach me some next time.

After Arisa and me have sampled them, the hamburg steak critics, Pochi and Tama also eat them.

"Nyu~? The hamburg isn't right~"
"Hamburg is softer, and elastic, and like juwatt when you eat it nanodesu! You eat it like, munch, and then happiness nanodesu."

I take the fork away from Pochi's hands that are swinging around passionately in front of Nea-san. That's dangerous.

Liza is nodding every time she eats a mouthful. Since the corner of her eyes have slackened, it seems to suit her taste.
Nana also curiously puts some into her mouth. She quietly only comments, "Delicious", but it doesn't seem to be a compliment.

Right at then, Lulu carries in a grilled hamburg steak.
The hamburg steak is put on a plate like the one in a family restaurant--A heated black iron plate put on top of a wooden plate type. I made them by Arisa's request when we were staying at the duchy capital.

Nea-san enjoys the aroma while seemingly being filled with emotion, and confirms the hamburg steak as if she's searing it into her memory. She should eat it soon.

"Itadakimasu."

She cuts one small piece with a knife and a fork, and puts it into her mouth.

Pochi and Tama are following that fork's movement while drooling. You two, haven't you just had breakfast two hours ago. I glance at Liza on the side, she's only slightly opening her mouth, there's no drool. Let's not talk about her gazes.

Er~rr, please don't cry while eating it.
Nea-san is eating while flooding tears. It might be inevitable since it's like a phantom dish from her point of view. Someone with skill like her should be able to reproduce it after she eats if once.

I carry Pochi and Tama under my arms and bring them to the kitchen to let Nea-san savors the taste calmly.
Let's make a Japanese-style hamburg steak, a stewed hamburg steak, and a tomato burger for the occasion. Of course I also haven't forgotten to make the shares for the hungry children.

◇

The visitors have increased when I return to the dining room.

"Wait Aze-sama, how long are you going to keep eating after saying that you'd only try a bite."
"But, it's delicious da mon."
"Da mon, not."

Lua-san, the miko, is scolding Aialize-san, the high elf, as she's eating beside Nea-san. This person really is like a child.

The afternoon on the day after our first meeting, Aialize-san came, led by Lua-san, to apologize for the prank. Since I honestly didn't mind about it at all, I accepted it frankly. I also apologized for Arisa.
It's fine and all with these two, but in fact, one of the elf elder actually also came as the representative to apologize the morning of that day. To be frank, I was troubled when he was apologizing so seriously, so I told him to not mind

it in a light tone. By the way, he was the one who gave permission for me to tour the elf hometown.

"Welcome, Aialize-sama, Lua-san. Nea-san, please taste these hamburg steaks too."

After greeting the two, I present the dish to Nea-san.

I ask Liza and Lulu to help me bring the prepared dishes on the kitchen here. I offer Aialize-san and Lua-san the dishes for the occasion. The pixies who have always been hanging around the kitchen, and the elves with free times are also helping to carry the dishes while coming here, no problem since I've made extra.

These pixies can only speak elf language, so the elves and me were going to act as interpreters, but Lua-san tactfully settled it with the translation rings that she took out out of nowhere to solve the problem. What a fantasy-like equipment. Even though it's a rare thing that isn't even among the loot from dragon's valley, Lua-san lets everyone to borrow the rings indefinitely. Apparently, there was an elf who zealously made translations rings a long time ago, so it's not something that unusual in Boruenan.

When the three are eating, some pixies who have enticed by the scents gather. And then, the elves begin to gather when they see those pixies, the pattern that I've gotten used to see for a few days is reproduced.
Apparently, the impact from, "The reproduction of the hero's will, hamburg", is really strong as more people have gathered than usual, and I'm made to replenish the dishes several times at the kitchen together with Lulu.

Lulu and me are looking at people who are enjoying the meal as if competing over it at the dining hall while we're eating fruits and presents on the small bowls that the elves who have come to eat have brought. I've used up a lot of meat I have in stock, but since there are still quite a lot even while excluding the whale meat, it's probably alright for the time being.
Besides, I've acquired a lot of cattle and goats from the elves. I keep the acquired cattle together with the horses in a giant hole beside the root of the

arbor. I leave the care to the living dolls the elves have deployed.

Of course, Mia and her parents have also come. She wanted some tofu hamburg steak, so I put not only soybeans on it but also fat-less meat that made 30% of the steak. I couldn't taste the meat when I sampled it, so Mia ate it without problem too.

Let's tell Mia about it after I've increased the meat ratio a bit more.

◇

I'm exchanging hamburg steak recipes with Nea-san while drinking the green tea that Lulu's made. Nea-san usually talks with single words, but she becomes talkative when it's about cooking methods and ingredients. I've already given her the recipe itself that I've written on the paper earlier.

I can see Lua-san, the miko, pestering Aialize-san from the edge of my view. Looks like they have some kind of business.

I entrust Lulu and Arisa to accompany Nea-san, and invite Lua-san and Aialize-san to another room.

"I'm really sorry, we've made you to attend us..."

I encourage them to sit while telling Lua-san to not mind about it. Aialize-san seems to be shy of strangers as she's only fidgeting around without talking, so I'm mainly conversing with Lua-san. Then, the irritated Lua-san begins to press on Aialize-san.

"Go on, Aze-sama."
"Um, yes, that."

Aialize-san talks while facing Lua-san, not me, but Lua-san forcefully twists her head toward me. Err, I understand how you feel, but her neck will be hurt

you know?
Aialize-san who crosses views with me and looks like she's on her wit's end speaks bombshell remarks at extreme pace.

"You're getting along well with the black dragon! Today you're not Kuro the hero are you!"
"Wait, Aze-sama."

Lua-san calms Aialize-san down in a hurry.

"Err, what are you talking about?"
"I'm sorry. Please allow me to talk about it."

I was playing dumb, but it seemed they had found out about me being the hero Kuro from the spirit light back then. People that let out spirit light seem to be abnormal even from Lua-san's memory, "There is no way there are two of them in the same time period." she smiles wryly.

It seems that Lua-san's familiar was watching the latter half of the rampage between the black dragon Heiron and me, and the party after that from afar. I surely felt a lot of frightened gazes at that time, it must have slipped among them.
Looks like they think I'm using an advanced nature magic spell, [Fake Patch], to make my name and title become different from that time.

"And now, as for the main subject--"

Normally, I expect them to demand, "Do this and that if you want us to not talk.", but somehow, I can't imagine the elves here to utter such words. Even if they wish something, they look like the type who will ask for help instead of bargaining for it.

"I will! Teach you!"

Aialize-san grasps her fists tightly and declares so as she stands up. I don't know what she's going to teach me, but I wait for her next words.

She seems to be embarrassed with my stare as she crouches down while turning red. She's the delicately troublesome type isn't she.

"So, that, like the way to suppress the spirit light! Or the way to prevent the spirits from gathering."

She continues her words as she hides herself behind Lua-san.
How do I say this, she looks like a timid teacher who's hiding behind her middle school student's back when she's doing that with the petite Lua-san like that.

Thus, I'm going to be taught by the extremely unreliable Aialize-sensei.

9-18. Ishibutai Training

Satou's here. There are a lot of manga set during the Heian period, thus, there are a lot of masterpieces. I read the complete set of, "It's a wonderful HEIANKYO", that my childhood friend had recommended.
What I thought during that time was if the sleeves of *kariginu* the characters are wearing wouldn't get caught on tree branches if they went to hunt with it? Such was my question. I wonder if people really used that clothes for hunting~
<TLN: *Kariginu* is a type of traditional Japanese clothes.>

◇

"Fooo~! Heian Romance kitaa!"

It looks like my clothes is the reason why Arisa shouts strangely.
I've been given clothes for training from Aialize-san, but I wonder if it's an influence from the hero Daisaku, or other Japanese people, the clothes is a *kariginu*--I guess it's easier to understand if I say that it's an *onmyouji* clothes. The inside garment is a white unlined *kimono*, but the outer garment and the *sashinuki hakama* are green of different brightness each. Fortunately, there's no *eboshi*.
<TLN: Well, he's wearing traditional clothes, so you can google each of those terms if you're curious what they look like.>

"Master, you're wonderful."
"Master looks manly with the robe or armor, but the elf native dress also suits you well."
"They're good clothes with high magic defense."

Lulu seems to like it too. Let's make some junihitoe later.
Looks like Nana has specially used [Sense Magic] to check these clothes.
Just like Nana's said, these clothes are made from Yuriha fiber that's also used

to create Arisa's and Mia's robes. It seems that you can compose a defensive film magic circuit on the surface of the fabric by weaving the fiber with some special method. The function can deploy a defensive film that resembles the body surface of the black dragon. Monsters above certain levels are naturally equipped with the film, but with these clothes, looks like you can also use it by putting a little magic into the clothes.

"Pochi is also going to train nodesu!"
"Tama too~?"

I was thinking what was the rustling about, turned out the two had changed to the Shinsegumi costumes from the duchy capital back then. I was going to refuse the two since it seemed that the training this time wouldn't go well if there were a lot of people around, but apparently, the training of the two is slightly different.

"Shagnig's invited us nodesu."
"Treasure hunt~"
"Shagnig is this playful Leprechaun old man, he's invited them to the playground where the elves children play."
"It looks to be a facility arranged with safe mock traps, and living dolls that are made to look like monsters."
"Reporting myself to participate in the exercise."

Arisa complemented Pochi's and Tama's words while slurping her drool.
Since Liza and Nana are also going to participate, I allow it. The playground for the children of those indulgent elves shouldn't be dangerous.
The one who designed that playground is an elf who was the teacher of the teacher of Shagnig, but the one who actually built it was his teacher, a Spriggan called Rileks. At the present time, seems he's gone to observe the Saga empire labyrinth in order to gain new ideas. The one who designed the playground has gone away for more than 100 years from the elves hometown, so I likely won't see him.

◇

Together with Lua-san who's come to pick me while wearing miko outfits, I arrive at a rocky area that overlooks some waterfall, around 30 kilometers away from the world tree. We moved by using the Dryad's [Teleport(Relocate). It's convenient enough even though it can only be done within Boruenan forest.

At the inner part of the rocky area, there's an ishibutai with a huge rock.
<TLN: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ishibutai_Kofun >

Aialize-san is on the center of that ishibutai.
No well, it's fine that you're there.

What are those clothes.

White shirt and tight skirt, and there are glasses with triangular lenses as well. She's tied her hair into a bun on her back, and left only two bangs at the right and left on the front. That short wand probably acts as the instructor stick.

It's the so called stereotypical female teacher clothing.

Hero Daisaku.... Please be moderate with the culture hazard.
Well, I guess it's fine since it's a feast for my eyes.

"Satou-san, you're late."

You shouldn't do cosplay if you're going to blush anyway.
I'd like to keep staring at her, but then the story won't progress, so I work the [Poker Face] skill hard.

"I'm sorry for being late."
"Aze-sama, please don't play around and change into the priest outfits."
"Isn't it fine, Daisaku's even said that these clothes give +1 effect to the teaching skill."

"That is a joke of his."

Aialize-san is shocked towards what Lua-san's said about the [Teaching Skill +1] being a lie rather than her scolding. I wonder why, maybe she really did believe it.

I gaze at the superb view of the waterfall on top of the ishibutai until after Aialize-san has pulled herself together. It's quite a spectacle for multiple waterfalls to fall onto one pool despite not to the degree of Niagara. Water are also flowing down from the rocks that are floating along the steep cliff. I wonder if it works like the (Water Bottle) I have? It's quite a strange sight (fantasy).

Since I can hear a cough of someone clearing her throat, I turn around. Aialize-san who has changed to miko clothes is there. It was hard to restrain myself from turning as the rustling sound were inviting.

"Then please drink this before we begin the training."

Aialize-san presents a folded paper with some red power inside.
I wonder what is this, it's more transparent even compared to the magic core powder.

I feel like I've seen it somewhere.

Right, it's similar to the ruby powder in the jewels workshop at duchy capital. The powder occasionally emit some light, it's probably some kind of magic medicine. The AR indicates that it's [<<Powder of Philosopher's Stone>>]

Philosopher's stone?!

"This is?"
"It's the powder of miracle stone. Although it can help pregnant women who drink it during the delivery, its main use is to augment magic effect."

Lua-san answered my question.

Seems that it's stimulated some strange rivalry from Aialize-san as she begins to talk smoothly.

"It's a valuable item as only one pebble can be harvested from the world tree in a year! That's why, you can't spill it."

I see, it's harvested from the world tree huh.
I wonder why do I feel that it's like a calculus.
<TLN: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calculus_%28medicine%29 >

I take the red powder into my mouth, and flush it down the throat with the water that Lua-san's has passed to me.
There's no taste. The Magic Perception skill tells me the movements of the powder. Although little, mana gush out from the powder.

"Then, let's start with the warm-up. Mimic me as I move okay."

I mimic Aialize-san's movements while confirming it with space grasp. The exercise is quite full of body motion. Seems that these movements are for spreading the powder to my whole body. I understand that the powder is absorbed when it's reached my stomach, and carried to my whole body via the blood flow.

"Next, put your mana throughout your body."

I fill my body with mana as instructed. It's similar like when the self-healing kicks in. I'm careful as to not let the mana flow to the *kariginu* with yuriha fiber.

The powder in my blood absorb the mana as I fill my body with it.

"You're good."
"That's true, normally the mana would have leaked to the yuriha fiber clothes, and one wouldn't be able to circulate the mana well, but he did it smoothly."

I'm happy to be praised, but is it fine to continue as it is?

The adjustment is relatively hard, so I don't have any margin to speak.

After the powder in the bloodstream have absorbed certain amount of mana, it's releasing the mana this time. This feeling, I guess it's about the same with the holy light that the holy sword emit.

"Listen well, you have to seize the overflowing mana in your body, and hold it down. Then, spread it on the surface of your body as if you're making a thin film."

I see, it's the typical genius' way of teaching. However, I somehow understand.
By using the time when I seize Zen's shadow whips as a reference, I grasp it. Then, I spread that mana thin. Since I have some experience of making thin film version of the flexible armor, it's relatively easy.

>[Spirit Light Control Skill Acquired]
>[Mana Control Skill Acquired]

"Alright, it's a success."
"Eh?! Ah, it's true. I nearly cannot see the spirit light."

Lua-san confirmed as she turned her eyes silver to the spirit seer version. Unfortunately, since I can't see the leaked spirit light in the first place, I'll believe in Lua-san's words.
Moreover, I've also understood that the mana that have always been leaking from my body for a bit have mostly stopped leaking. Since the leak in this case can be stopped with the spy skill, the mana control skill might be unnecessary. Let's check the difference with mana operation skill when it's time for me to activate it.

"You're quite good, normally it would have taken several years."
"I think it's already not at such level. Heroes are really abnormal aren't they."

Lua-san is shocked, but I feel it's not quite right for me to console that, so I ignore her. I thanked the two for the assistances, fix my appearance, and

turned around, but it seemed to be premature.

"Then, let's start the second round of the training."
"That's right, we've used the valuable miracle stone after all, so let's finish the next lesson while it's still effective."
"This time you have to thin out the mana film only on the eyes part, and then slightly open holes on it."

Don't say that so easily.
It's hard to operate by parts, um. Yup, that went well.

"Look at both my hands okay. ■■■■■■■■ ■■ <<Summon Water Element>>"

Water overflow from both Aialize-san's hands that she's thrust above. After a while, the water formed into a ball that floats lightly slightly above her hands.

I stare hard at it as instructed.

Concentrate.

I can't see anything beside water--no, there's a small blue light with indefinite form. It can't be seen when I stare hard, but on the contrary, I can see it when I'm not focusing.

>[Spirit Seer Skill Acquired]

It was unexpectedly easy to get. I wonder if it's due to the philosopher's stone.

"I see it."
""Eh?!""

Eh? Why are they so surprised.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, it's a bluish light with indefinite form right."
"That, that's right."
"That's amazing, there's only 1 among 100 elves who can obtain it."

One to a hundred doesn't seem to be that rare.

"Alright, then let's start the third round! Let's employ the spirits!"

Aialize-san whom in high tension declares so while raising her arms overhead.
It'd be a gentleman of me to use [Dry] to dry her clothes now, but just for a bit more, only a teeny bit more, I want to enjoy this scene.

Miko clothes wet from water is nice, isn't it.

9-19. Ishibutai Training (2)

Satou's here. ECO thing had spread on various things, but I guess the closest one to me was the solar power for home. We have magic in the other world, I wonder if that can be considered as ECO?　Where does that mana come from in the first place anyway.

◇

"Here I go, ■ Wind."

First, Aialize-san shows an example.

Since I've activated the spirit seer skill, I can clearly see what Aialize-san's done.
With just one word she had chanted the spell that made the colorless spirits gather around her, which then turned into the green colored wind elemental spirits without a pause, and invoked the magic to create the [Wind] phenomenon.

The strength is only around (Air Hammer), but the chant is terribly short.

"See? The manifested magic is no different than normal magic, but the chanting is short and the required mana is very much less as the advantages."
"On the other hand, it's powerless at places without spirits."

Lua-san added the disadvantages that Aialize-san had forgotten to say.
It's unclear as to what she means by places without spirits, but it seems that there aren't many spirits in man-made places, and monsters' dwellings. I understand the latter. They probably become the fodders for monsters like the armor newts back then.

When I activated the spirit seer skill, I was treated to the view of precious

metal colored light centered on gold color emitted from Aialize-san. Lua-san has faint flickering light of cold color type. From what can I see on the two, spirit light doesn't seem to have fixed color, it can change to a degree. I can also see it on the flying birds above the waterfall, but the light is quite faint, it's hard to make it up.

The light that leaks out from my body is of pale white.
When I try to release the restrained spirit light, light so intense, it makes you think your eyes have stopped functioning, dye the surrounding. The spirits around the waterfall have gathered with terrible speed. I can't see quite well since the spirits are obstructing the view, but the light emitted by me is primarily of warm color, it's crude rich color.
Mia has commented that it's [Beautiful], but aesthetically speaking, I think the light emitted by Aialize-san is far more beautiful.

Oops, I can't see the surrounding like this.
I converge the spirit light in a hurry, and make it stop leaking outside. The spirits who have lost their goal scatter unsteadily. The only spirits remaining are mostly the ones who are attracted to the spirit light emitted from Lua-san, and Aialize-san, the world is back to normal. They're slow compared to when they're gathering.

"You've already been able to control it at will haven't you. Your adaptability is amazing isn't it. Right, Aze-sama."
"Y, yeah."

Aialize-san seems to have been dazzled as she answers Lua-san half-heartedly while blinking repeatedly.

"I'm sorry Aialize-sama. I relaxed the control since I wanted to confirm something for a bit."
"I, it's your first time, so it can't be helped."

Huh? Aialize-san's shyness has been activated. Even though she was able to talk straight to me a while ago, she turned toward Lua-san again when she talked to me. It might have been too dazzling.

"R, rather than that! Try it."
"Yes, ◆ Wind."

Oh? Slight breeze blows even though I've failed the chanting. I wonder if the spirits are being considerate?

"Ara? Are you not good with chanting?"
"Yes, I can't do it well no matter what I do."
"Yet, didn't the wind blow just now?"
"The spirits might be being considerate."

I reply Lua-san with my hunch, but she denies it readily.

"That's not happening. With the exception of something like Dryad, spirits don't have ego, or rather, intelligence. Their only roles are to mechanically take mana from the earth veins, and deliver the mana to creatures that need it."

Hee.
Then, I won't get to meet something like a sexy Undine onee-san huh. That's unfortunate.

"Is that really so? They're saying something when a lot of them gather sometimes you know."

Oh, Aialize-san presents a dissenting opinion.

"Aze-sama is the only one who says something like that. The other high elves aren't saying that right?"
"Uu, that's true but. I really feel that they're saying something."

Aialize-san who have been denied by Lua-san puffs her cheeks and turn away. Her reaction is like Mia.
There's a high possibility that she's just imagining it, but it's not necessarily good to decide that it has to be a misunderstanding. Even during game

development, when we deemed that it was, "Just your imagination," during the debugging process, most of it got found by the market instead.

"May I test it once?"
"Mou, even you Satou-san."
"Try it! You'll absolutely hear it!"

I test it after the two approve.
When the light dazzles, I endure the spirits' assaults, and wait for the wild dance of the spirits to end. After about 10 minutes, the spirits has surrounded me like a cocoon. When I look closer, they don't seem to be still, but they're circling around from a distance relaxedly.

Fumu, I don't hear anything though.
I guess it's just Aialize-san's imagination?

Right then, I receive some microscopic amount of mana from the spirits.
I wonder if this is the signal of intent? The moment I recognize it, I can hear little little commotion together with a sense as if something has clicked.

They were certainly trying to communicate something, but unfortunately I couldn't understand more. It feels like trying to listen to hustle and bustle 100 meters ahead. I didn't get any skill too, so there might be some kind of condition to hear the spirits' voices.

"They seem to be trying to say something, but I can't understand what is it."
"That's right! I want to hear it at least once."
"Satou-san, you're not kidding aren't you?"

I told the perplexed Lua-san that it was not a joke.

◇

Now then, unfortunately I couldn't employ the spirits at all.

I had expected it already, just like with magic, I couldn't chant the spirit employment well too.

Due to careless mistake of Aialize-san who tried to show an example, I had gotten soaked together with Lua-san, but I didn't have any complaint since I obtained spirit magic skill at that time. Aialize-san who was disheartened from Lua-san's scolding was adorable.

"That reminds me, how do the changing of spirit light strength work?"
"I wonder?"
"Wait, Aze-sama."

Lua-san makes a retort to Aialize-san who tilts her head while putting her finger on her cheek. Lua-san explained.

"In case with people, it's not because of the difference in mana pools, in truth, we don't know much about it. In case with the earth veins, the location with thick flow emits stronger light. The area around the source especially shines intensely."
"That's right. If I'm not mistaken, yes, there's a source on the basin of the waterfall here."

Eh?!
I involuntarily drop my line of sight after hearing Aialize-san's words. When I activate spirit seer skill, there's really light leaking from the waterfall basin. The light isn't that strong even though the water isn't muddy.

"There are all sort of sources after all."

Lua-san came out with follow-up-like words as she seemingly saw my disappointed expression.

"Now that you mention it, what are sources?"
"I guess they're the holes where the earth veins gush out?"
"That's right, there are more than 100 of them on this continent, and among them, the scale of the one on the dragon valley is extraordinary. We don't

quite know the total number of sources that are as small as this waterfall basin one."

The source of dragon valley huh, I'm positive that I've ruled over it. The cause of my spirit light might have been that unexpectedly. According to Lua-san, there are many things that are built on top of sources, like cities or labyrinths. The small sources become the dwellings of monsters or mythical beasts, or get to have some magician build a tower on it.
Fumu, judging from this story, the maze of Trazayuya should have been built on top of a source, but I didn't get to rule it like with the dragon valley. I wonder if there's a limit of being only able to rule one source?

I watched the world tree behind me with spirit seer since It caught my attention.
The body of the tree is shining dazzlingly. Moreover, when I strain my eyes, I can see concentric circles of light rings spreading like ripples around the tree branches.

"Isn't it beautiful?"
"Yes, very much so. Is that world tree a source too?"
"No, it's different--"
"Aze-sama."
"--, that's not from the earth veins, but from the void, err, I wasn't supposed to say it was I?"
"Well, I don't mind if it's Satou-san, but please don't spread it to the outside world okay."

I nod to Lua-san. Aialize-san who has confirmed that continues speaking.

"Do you know that there are ether flowing in the void?"
"I'm sorry, I'm ignorant."
"Ara, you can just study if you don't know. Ether is--"

Aialize-san proudly explained about ether, but when she was explaining the fifth element after the four primary, earth, water, fire and wind elements, she cut the complicated talk in one stroke, and so, in short, the intermediary

substances in the outer space are massive amount of mana that have been blown.
<TLN: The author use 'mana' not the 'maryoku', or magic power here. I dunno if they're the same at this point.>

"--and then you see, the world tree use its foliages, or rather its root, or rather, terminals to suck mana from the flow of ether. And then, the released mana are sent deep into the ground which activate earth veins of the earth. The light of that spirit tree is the figures of the spirits who have gathered on the leak of the mana flow that's going from the sky to the earth."

I see~
It's a gigantic magic device I guess. However, Aialize-san. She's explaining very fluently, completely unlike before.

"If such thing was to be known to greedy people, there would be a lot of countries that would aim for the world tree starting from Boruenan, so please keep this a secret. "

It's the so-called solar power unit with large output after all. They can do something great if they can monopolize it. I promised the two that I would absolutely never reveal it. I said to them that I wouldn't mind to be binded with [Geass] or [Contract], but she smiled wryly while saying, "You don't have to go that far."

I was quite serious, but I wonder if the elves don't have much sense of crisis? I confirm it to Lua-san.

"If the world is going to be destroyed because of the mismanagement of the world tree, divine punishments will fall from the gods, so I think the worst won't happen."

That reminds me, this is a world where gods exist huh.

But, well, I will be careful as to not reveal it to anyone. I carved so in my heart.

9-20. The Spriggan's Training Site

Satou's here. Relative to the number of people who play the nonobligatory tutorial parts of games, it's hard to make them you know.
In real world, they are training or OJT, but I wonder if it's effective~

◇

When we were tidying up after the training was over, a [Telephone] came up.

It's from Arisa.

"Umm, hello, is this the house of Pendragon-san?"

I can hear Arisa speaking with slightly higher voice, I desperately try to endure my exhaustion.
You think this is a landline of old?

"Heffo, hooissit?"
<TLN: Yes, it's just as incorrigible in the raw.>
"Ah, I'm sorry, I got the number wrong."

I felt slightly mischievous, so I pretended to be someone else. I thought that Arisa would immediately booed, but she plainly apologized and cut off the telephone.
I was just joking, but was Arisa the type who's not good with phone calls?
While feeling slightly apologetic, I call Arisa back with [Telephone].

"Y, yes, this is Arisa Pendragon speaking!"

I want to retort, but I'll endure it. There's no doubt that something is happening, so I look there with [Clairvoyance].

"Arisa, it's Satou, did anything happen?"

"Ah, I'm glad, some old man I don't know received the telephone just now, I was surprised."

I saw Arisa who was flustered.
She doesn't seem to be injured, but it sure is awful.

"And so, we've screwed up for a bit, won't you come save us?"
"OK, I'll go immediately."

I reply Arisa with two words, and ask Aialize-san to get Dryad teleport us to the attraction where Arisa and the others are. The place seemed to be famous as we immediately departed when I told them the name of the attraction I had heard from Arisa.

◇

"This is the training place for the third fairy."

The black building that looks like a deformed bat seems to be the entrance. I enter to the red mouth that opens. It's really attraction-like.

This attraction has a lot of silly traps, and has become the playground for the elf children.
It seem to be play where children have to clear the eight attractions that are appropriate to their ages. Children who don't have very bad reflexes can clear them easily, but there are exceptions in everything-- and one of them is Aialize-san. She wanted to follow me, but she stopped with the frantic look of Lua-san.

She looks to be the clumsy element, so let's make her wait.
Just in case, I ask Lua-san to call for other help if I'm too slow in returning.

When I went inside, there's a living doll with torn neck lying on the floor. Judging from the state of its neck, the cause is probably Liza's spear. She

really shouldn't break the attractions.

I use [All Map Exploration] and check the internal structure of this place.
It's quite wide, about 6-stories building big.

Everyone seems to have been divided into three groups.
Liza, Lulu and Pochi are the closest to me. Arisa and Mia are in the middle.
The farthest ones are Tama, Nana, and the tour guide this time, Shagnig-shi, the leprechaun.

Huh? Did Lulu and Mia come along too.

I make use of quick dressing skill to change, from the borrowed kariginu, into work clothes that are okay even if they get dirtied.

I set marker on the shortest route, and run with sky drive. Among the innumerable traps that I've found with trap discovery skill, I only cancel the ones that are unavoidable by using [Magic Hand] remotely.

Every trap seems to have been made with concern as to not injure.
Instead of poison gas, it spews strange irritant gas, there's knee-deep water in the bottom of the pit holes, the arrows shot from the trap have shock absorbed leather on its pointed end that even if you're hurt by it, it won't be serious.

When I avoid the traps, living dolls that are made to look like monsters attack from the back. There are colors painted on the place that seem to be its weakness, and it's made to stop if you hit that place with a wooden sword or your fist.

However, the layout is quite unpleasant.
Like having another trap right after you've avoided a trap, or getting attacked by the fake monsters just when you think that you've reached the safety zone, it reminds me of the consumers trap surprise.

I arrive at the room where Liza and the others are, in one minute. I had

passed through some corridors and stairs, it seemed to be quite deep underground.
Liza has been caught in a web trap that has been lifted about 6 meters high to the ceiling while looking very unwilling.

There's a wall modeled after a monster's face right beside Liza. And then, Pochi has been eaten to half of her body on the monster's gaping mouth. I see her feet hanging full of discontent. Of course Pochi is unhurt since it's an attraction.

However, how did she even get stuck being eaten like that. No, when I look closer, there's a protrusion that seem usable as a scaffold near Pochi. The trap is probably made to eat someone who's climbing to save their friend.

And also, where is Lulu?
I turn my head, and she seems to have been caught on a wire trap with both her leg and an arm lifted, and cannot move nearby the place where the floor has disappeared near the door on the other end of the room. All the wires only go to the height of her back. It's probably made as to prevent blood from going up to the victim's head.

However, Lulu's legs seems to have stepped on the trap as both are lifted to different directions. Her posture looks embarrassing for a maiden. I have to secretly fix her rolled up skirt with [Magic Hand] while being unseen before I call them out.

"I've come to help."
"Ah, master!"
"I'm very sorry, master."
"Master, Pochi is over here~ heelp~"

I quickly rush to Lulu, and cut the hemp ropes with a dagger.
Next, I go up beside Pochi with sky drive, and press the release button right next to the trap to save her. I quickly catch her on my arms since she was going to slide and fall.

"Thank you nanodesu. Mia's said that there's a button to save Liza on the other side of this wall nodesu."

I see.
I use [Magic Hand] to press the button since it's clearly there. I hear some rattling nearby, and then the rope that lifts Liza lowers. It's quite particular about the detail as it's lowering slowly to prevent serious injuries.

"Master, please save Arisa and Mia. The two have fallen into this hole."

Lulu points to a caved in floor that has created a deep hole. Looks like Arisa and Mia are over there.

"I understand."
"Those two must be alright aren't they."

Lulu joins her hands together and asks as if praying.

"Yeah, they're alright of course. Arisa was the one who had called me here after all."

When I confirm on the map, consecutive cave-ins don't seem like it'll happen, so I evacuate the three to take a refuge in a relatively structurally-safe place. Liza, and Pochi wanted to come along, but since they had just shown their shameful sights, they meekly withdrew.
I intended to go back quickly, but I took out a bag with some canteens and baked sweets from the Item Box and gave it to Lulu.

I jump into the collapsed place while waving to the three.

I check the collapse while regulating my speed with sky drive.
Apparently, somethings are advancing through the underground, and have created crevices on many floors around this area. That somethings are the level 20 worm monsters which seem to be the cause. According to the map, they have made a nest underground 2-3 kilometers ahead. I'll take care of them later.

◇

At the end of the descent, the two are there being wrapped by feelers from a living doll posing as a plant monster.

"Thank you for waiting."
"Fast. What kind of cheat did you use this time."
"Satou."

I think Arisa misunderstands the meaning of cheat sometimes.

"The Dryad helped me come here."
"Wa, by Dryad, do you mean that green little girl? Don't tell me, she robbed your lips again~~."
"That didn't happen."

She's energetic even though she's being wrapped.
I looked for the release device, but I couldn't reach it since it had been buried by the collapsed floor stones. Since it can't be helped, I cut the feeler and release them. I might be destroying the attractions, but it's already half-destroyed anyway.

"Thank you."

I release Arisa who's nearby. She should have just cut the feelers with space magic and escaped. When I told her so while freeing Mia, surging wave of protests came from Arisa.

"The power of space magic is great you know. I would cut my own body if I used it to cut feelers that were so close. A maiden won't be able to become a bride if she's hurt before it right--no, I can get some injuries here, and force him to make me her bride can't I?!"

The latter part of Arisa's scheme was said in whisper, but I could clearly hear it with straining ears skill. I warn her, "Be moderate with your scheme okay."

"Thanks."

Mia hugs me when I've finished saving her, so I put her down. I pick up a long wand that has been dropped on the ground and pass it to Mia. Mia probably couldn't escape with magic because she didn't have the wand. Feel like I've heard that she's said her aim is off without a wand.

Now then, it seems there's no exit here.

"How about the other three?"
"Liza is caught on the trap above this room right, they're operating separately to release her."
"Nn."

I carry the two back to the above room for the time being. Since they're light, I carry them together at once.

"Don't carry me on your shoulder~"
"Objecting luggage."

Their maidens' hearts would be hurt if I treat them like luggage I guess? Well, forgive me.

When I get back to the upper room, I see Tama waving on the opposite room from the mouth of the monster that had caught Pochi. I can see Nana and Shagnig-shi behind her.

Apparently, Tama and the others were going ahead to save Liza and the others who had been caught by traps, but the floor where Arisa and Mia were standing collapsed right after they entered the next room. Tama and Shagnig tried to go back in a hurry, but the door seemed to have been warped, and they couldn't go back. Since they couldn't help it, they advanced through the maze to the room where the button to release Liza was, that is the other side

of the monster mouth that had caught Pochi and rejoined.

Arisa seemed to have contacted me first thing after thinking the possibility of other members getting injured from another collapsing accidents. GJ, Arisa.

"I am truly ashamed. Letting such dangerous situation to happen during my tour."

Shagnig-shi gets down on his knees to apologize, but the unexpected accidents aren't really his responsibility. He doesn't seem to be a monster parent too. Since he had checked the place many times three days ago, the worms probably made the holes around 1-2 days ago.

Today's exploration has ended since the facility is going to be reinspected.

Tonight's prey are... seven Metal Worms.

9-21. Pests Extermination

Satou's here. There are many cases where the gathered experts can't come up with a solution, yet a single word casually said by an amateur becomes the impetus to solve the problem.
Turning the problem into a catastrophe from the single word of the higher-ups also happen a lot though.

◇

"Yes? Pests extermination expert is it?"

I stopped my hands which were constructing a living doll, and parroted the word of the elder elf-san who had visited the workshop.

Here is the workshop of the living dolls crafter, Sotorineya-san. The living dolls that are on the attraction the other day, and most of the ones in the town are his works.

Before he started teaching me, he warned that even if I learned it, I wouldn't be able to reproduce it outside since the raw material doesn't exist there. As I understand, they use philosopher's stone, like the one from before, as the core which acts as the power reactor, and that can't be produced outside of Boruenan forest.

Nevertheless, the other structures beside that one look usable so this endeavor won't be useless. I want to know it so bad, particularly the structure of the information IO, and the AI logic control.

Putting that aside, it's about the elder-san.

"I've heard from Shagnig-san. You seems to have wonderfully exterminated the five and seven poisonous insects that had bred at the training site. We're expecting much from that skill, please lend us your wisdom."

Ah, that huh.
There were some cave-in incidents at the training ground where Arisa and the others were playing yesterday, it was probably about the investigation that I did together with Shagnig-san at the remnant of the site. Looks like the elders have known about how I exterminated the poisonous insects that had bred to become so many at that time.

By equipping Insect Slayer title, and using [Bug Wiper] magic at full power, it was a simple work. I tried unequipping the title at my second try, but it wasn't any different. I can't decide if the title doesn't have any additional effect, or if it's because it was too overkill in the first place.

"If you're fine with me, I will gladly give some counseling."

Or rather, I'll even go and exterminate the pests.

I've been taught many things like the way to conceal the spirit light by Aialize-san, and many knowledges and recipes from the other elves after all.

The elder calms me who has stood up enthusiastically.
Since they don't seem to be in a hurry, they will send someone to pick me at the place where I'm staying tomorrow morning.

That day, the living doll that I had finished constructing couldn't even stand up.
Looks like it's a long road ahead.

◇

"Now, Satou of Shiga kingdom! I've come to pick you."

The one who has come here is Aialize-san.
What are you doing high elf-sama.

"Please call me Satou. Then, shall we go."
"Yes."

Aialize-san whose face has reddened holds out her hands slanting from below.
Does this mean that we should join our hands?

We might be going with space magic.
I grasp her hand while thinking such thing.

Arisa leans her body from the balcony and shouts, "Guilty!" Pochi and Tama have also joined saying, "Guilty", but I wonder if they know the meaning~?

Although it might be called space magic, we entered to a block of the world tree with the Dryad's [Relocate] like before.

It might be boorish of me, but there wasn't any need to join hands right?

◇

The sky is filled with stars.
Rather, this is the first time I see stars that aren't twinkling with naked eyes.

The place where the Dryad has taken us is the observatory room at the center of the city part on the zenith block of the wold tree.
If the AR and the map are right, then we're about 300 kilometers high above the ground. We haven't reached the orbit of geostationary satellites, but this should have exceeded the stratosphere quite a bit. I guess it's in the slightly lower part of the low earth orbit?

Even though we're this high, the gravity is still at 1G, I wonder if it's due to magic?
No, before that, such long tree shouldn't have been able to hold its own

weight. I timidly try to ask that matter to elder-san but--

"How is the tree not broken apart and destroyed."
"It's the gods protection."

Don't think that you can deceive me by using gods, protections and such. Apologize to physic teachers!

I wanted to shout, "Ugaa" like Arisa, but I forcefully held it down with my will. Since Poker Face-san is doing its best, the elder should not know it.

"I'm sorry, the elder is ignorant in the technical sort of things."

A researcher-like woman elf, Jia-san who's waiting beside us explains it to me.
I'm told that the countless branches of the world tree drive themselves into the adjacent sub-space (Isa Plane) like anchors which help distribute the world tree's weight and support it. I've abstained from understanding what the [Adjacent Sub-space] is, but it seems the weight of each branches isn't much by itself, so they're not disintegrating.

There's still something that bugs me, but I'll just regard it as some mysterious tree (Fantasy).

Let's cut to the chase.

"Please look at the branch ahead."

I look at the gigantic branch that extends on the empty air that Jia-san has pointed. The branch diverges innumerably in the middle of the way, and the last bunch look as thin as threads. It extends through as far as eyes can see, but Jia-san points out even further than that.
Aialize-san who looks bored beside me is looking through a telescope on her hands, is that some kind of magic? I can't help but feel that's not it. I'm interested in what kind of thing that Daisaku-shi has influenced it with, but let's not touch it now.

I can't see anything with normal sight, so I use [Distant View], [Looking Afar], [Night-Vision], [Light-Intensity Adjustment], and [Mana Perception] together to look.

Jellyfish?

"Is it about the jellyfish things that wrap their legs on the branch that looks like a thread?"

Jia-san who's presenting a telescope to me stiffens, but she answers by just nodding her head.

However, why is it jellyfish in space. It should have been whales--no, Tuna. Yep, tuna fit the space well.

I expel the stupid thought in my head.
I've forgotten since I was drunk with the space-station like spectacles. It's a bit late, but I execute [All Map Exploration].
The branch only looks like a shining branch that extends up to one kilometer long from where I am, but I know from the map that it extends like a superfine thread for about 100 kilometers long.

This thread-like branch is probably scooping up the mana from the ether.

From what I've gathered with the map, these jellyfish are called [Evil Fish], they are around level 20-40 averaging at 30, they're just small fry monsters. However, there are 10.000 of them. They seem to have special racial ability called [Absorb]. When I look closer, their category is not monster but [Mysterious Creature]. The heck is that?

◇

"Those jellyfish are eating the mana that the world tree has gathered along

the way. That's already troubling by itself, but they even plant their eggs in the world tree and breed."

I see, the pests extermination is about that jellyfish after all.
It's easy if I can just destroy every jellyfish around the tree.

"T, that is--"

Unfortunately, it doesn't seem to be that easy.

"--There are multiple reasons why we can't exterminate them."

The first one, the world tree defence mechanisms will burn you into a charred remain if you exterminate the jellyfish.

Hah? What the heck? I think so, and I ask again.
Apparently, the jellyfish have infected the world tree with their poison and make the world tree thinks that they're parts of it. The elves seemed to have tried to detoxify the world tree with magic, and made it sleep while they exterminated the jellyfish, but the scale of the world tree was too big, it was a failure.

The second reason, when the number of jellyfish have decreased below a certain point, they will multiply themselves explosively.

Nice for aquaculture! So I think, but it's not that easy.
When the jellyfish explosively multiply, they seem to consume the neighboring world tree's branches in large quantity. Furthermore, it will trigger the chain reaction from the nearby jellyfish and they will also proliferate, so if we can't exterminate them all at once, they will increase instead.

The third reason, there is a manaless zone around the jellyfish.

I don't understand the meaning so I inquire more, it seems that you can't use magic near the jellyfish.

Looks like this is why the jellyfish investigation doesn't progress. The elves call it the void, but it's practically the outer space, so they shouldn't be able to enter it without magic.
They also can't use the magic-made artificial life (living dolls) to attack the jellyfish since the defence mechanisms of the world tree turned the dolls into charred remains.

"It's quite terrible isn't it."
"It's really terrible you know~"

Jia-san wails like it's from the bottom of her heart to my 'it's other people's problem'-like thought. The dark circles under her eyes are deep.

Now then, I've thought of several ways to deal with them, but let's confirm them with Jia-san.

9-22. Pests Extermination (2)

Satou's here. Curry is great. You can make curry as long as the vegetables you put with the sauce made from curry powder are falling apart while you cook them. Even if the potatoes melt into powder-like thing, the curry is still curry nanodesu.

◇

"I want to confirm if you have investigated some things, is it fine?"
"Yes, we're fine with any opinion, so please."

Jia-san is glancing with eyes full of hope from below.
Ah, it's hard to say vague things in such atmosphere.

"Has anyone tried gathering them on one place and then shoot them with magic with great power from afar?"
"Yes, the Biroanan clan on the different continent did so, however, during the engagement the jellyfish kept propagating, while the world tree was counterattacking, so when every one of them had been defeated, half of the world tree's branches and the majority of the elves' life were lost."

Looks like there are world trees on another continents. Seems that Biroanan clan is a clan that's skillful with fire magic and quick to start a fight despite being elves. This might be a prejudice, but they don't really seem like elves~

"That clan is a bit different from others..."
"Jia, you shouldn't talk bad of other clan."
"I'm sorry, elder."

Aialize-san is nodding, "yep, yep", while folding her arms beside the elder.
That reminds me, she was here.

"What happened to that Biroanan clan and the world tree afterward?"

"They've defeated all of the jellyfish (Evil Jelly), but the mana that are sent to the earth from the world tree have decreased so much, nearly 30% of the continent become deserts or wastelands."

The damage is quite serious.
If we consider the indirect damage, isn't it worse than even the demon lord.

No one knows the detail about the long-distance attack that has been used by Biroanan clan, so the elder is going to inquire them.

"Then, the second point. Have you researched ways to capture the evil fish or such? It might be worth it to search for their elemental weakness, repulsing materials, or attracting materials (Pheromone)."
"Yes, both the Beriunan and Burainan clans should have researched them. The evil jelly elemental weaknesses are fire and heat. On the contrary, they seem to resist ice and darkness. I've never heard something like attracting material."
"Umu, I'll go ask about it from both clans."
"Yes, please."

The elder fluently makes a promise without putting an air to Jia-san who answers my question. Aialize-san is only nodding, 'yep, yep', beside the elder.
Is that alright, high-elf.

"The third and the last, the world tree is going to counterattack if we harm the evil fish externally right, but do you know just how far it can be injured before the counterattack comes?"
"We've checked this with analysis skill, and it seems the world tree will counterattack if the evil fish health is decreased by 30%."

Then, I wonder if it's possible to debuff or neutralize it?
If it's possible to use long-range attack magic, shouldn't it also be possible to use long-range status magic?

"Have you tried putting the evil fish to sleep, then pull them away from the world tree, and massacre them?"

"It should also be in the reports from both Beriunan and Burainan clans--ah, there is. It's possible to make them sleep, but it seems that the evil fish are monitoring each other, and once one of them is pulled at a certain distance away, the other evil fish will hinder it."

Jia-san turns the page of the paper file. It's surprising to see such low-tech things while we're in such a futuristic room.

Fumu, isn't fine if we just put them all to sleep?
I ask Jia-san so, but--

"That's impossible."

--it's rejected immediately. It says that once you've put the hundredth one to sleep, the first one will wake up. Moreover, they have high resistances against sleep and paralyze, it's hard to put them to sleep. The elves seem to have tried letting them absorb the mana from the sleeping potion, and it didn't show any noticeable effect.

They've tried to use water and wind magic, but magic can't penetrate the mana absorption zone around the evil fish if it's not at least intermediate level magic or above. Although, in case of the users whose magic penetrated the zone, even their elementary magic showed some effect on the evil fish, so their mana absorption zone probably isn't perfect.

For now, I ask elder-san to find out the details for "Hindering the evil fish."

The problem is their number and the distance.

◇

There are two cards in my hands that I can use to defeat the jellyfish before they can explosively propagate; [Meteor Shower], and [Laser]. I do have other techniques with high power, but these are the only two that can defeat

10.000 enemies on vast area in one shot.
First, [Meteor Shower] is out of question. The world tree is probably going to get destroyed along.

That means it's [Laser], but even if I shoot it as pulse laser, it has trajectory of line no matter what, so it'll end up felling many world tree's branches. If I do it carelessly, I could even damage outsiders even if it's not of the elves.

I also think about massacring them by myself by using sky drive and ground shrink, but the range is too vast, it'll take a long time to defeat them by hands. I'm envious with the shounen manga protagonist who can move at light speed. It'll be a cinch if I have teleport magic.

Looks like my own power isn't enough.

I feel regretful to say that I'm of no use after I brace myself.

Elder-san, and Jia-san say, "No need to apologize", and, "I'm quite thankful for the attracting material idea", but I can't help but feel that I've overlooked something.

She's patting my shoulder as if comforting me, but you haven't done anything right? High elf-sama?

◇

Now then, rather than satirizing Aialize-san, I should come up with something instead.

"What are you groaning about?"
"Ah~ there's a bit."

The day seemed to have got dark while I was brooding over without any good idea. Looks like everyone has come back from the training ground.

When I reply half-heartedly to Arisa's question while turning my eyes, not only Arisa, everyone is looking at me with worried looks.
No, Tama is doing things at her own pace, she's curling up like a ball on my lap.
Nana is like the usual too. She's playing with the pixies that she's caught by using cookies.

"Ah, sorry to make you worry. I need something to consult--"

I consult them about the jellyfish while leaving out the details.

"Fuhn, exterminating pests at an orchard huh. Can't you do it straightforwardly?"
"They've tried it already, it's no good."

"They'll be driven away if you make some noise~?"
"When you 'washa washa' they will run away nodesu."

Tama forms her hands to look like cat's paws, and spreads her arms wide. Pochi looks as if she's scared of Tama's hands, she's gesturing like she's running away in fluster. They're probably trying to show how bugs run away?

It seems doable if I can use [Fear] from mind magic, but there's no one that can make the scroll. I have [Bell of Fear] among the magic tools in my hand, I guess I should try its effect in some remote place. Ah, tools that make use of sound wave are useless in space huh.

"Magic."
"Ah, the insect repellent magic that was used before right. Master, if you use that magic, won't it be simple to exterminate the pests?"

Those are Mia and Lulu. It's the story about when there were a lot of small flying insects at the camping ground making them unable to sleep.
There's barely any elves that can use life magic, so it might be unknown to them unexpectedly. There are many derivatives of [Bug Wiper] magic, maybe

I should go and get them in the duchy capital. If it's effective, I'll consider it lucky.

"You open an insect cage, and then put a delicious meat inside nodesu."
"Using traps is a good idea. However, I suggest that the bait to be something sweet."

Nana revises Pochi's suggestion.
Traps are a good idea, but it'll be difficult to prepare traps for 10.000 jelly.

"I think using smoke to smoke them out is a good idea, but I don't think master will be troubled if that can settle it. How about unleashing birds and small animals that eat those insects yet don't harm the plants?"

Liza's suggestion is quite good, but unfortunately, I can't think of anything that can be the natural enemy of space jellyfish. The [Great Monstrous Fish (Tovkezeera)] from the other day seem like they will eat the jellyfish happily though.

"How about asking a puppeteer that become an insecteer, and have the insects leave the plant on their own to be exterminated?"

Arisa seems to be tired from the training today as she answers with some random idea.

"Ah, and also, this hit me from when Pochi talked about it earlier, but if you can't separate the bugs apart from each other, can't you just put them in the insect cages, and then take the cages away while they're like that~?"

When you consider just how many insect cages will be needed.... Oh?

Perhaps, this idea might be good?

Step 1: Put some to sleep and into the cage, then leave them alone.
Step 2: When we have caught them all, pull the cages away all at once from the world tree.

Step 3: Annihilation.

Looks good.
Step 1 looks like it'll need outrageous amount of works, but we can somehow do something to strengthen the cages. I don't have to worry about materials if I just use magic anyway, I'll look for something that's good against the [Absorption] racial ability of the jellyfish.

I can see the light somehow.
Let's consult various things with Jia-san tomorrow.

I go to Lulu who's gone head to prepare for dinner. The elves are going to eat together with us, so many married elf women have gathered in the spacious kitchen.

I've decreased the fat and increased the meat on the hamburg steak today.
I've made different kind of hamburg steak with the soup for Pochi and the others, but beside that, Mia eats the hamburg steak with meat while saying, "It's more delicious than usual."

Fufufu, the next one will not be tofu hamburg with meat inside, but hamburg steak with tofu.

"Today is also peerless and wonderful nanodesu."
"Three consecutive hamburg steak~?"
"Delicious."

It's popular with the beastkin girls too.

"It's no good to always have the same menu, so I guess I'll make something different tomorrow."
"I, it's not not good nodesu!"
"Nn."
"The sauce and the garnish are different, so it doesn't feel like the same menu you know?"
"Everyday is hamburg steak."

As expected, I don't want it to be everyday.

"I want to eat omelet rice or curry!"

A request comes from Aialize-san who has slipped into the dining table before I knew it. Lua-san wipes the sauce on her cheek. Beside Mia and her family, the elves who come to the banquet is alternating everyday, but Aialiaze-san has the perfect attendance.

Nea-san told me that Daisaku-shi had always wanted to eat either of the dishes, but they couldn't reproduce it until the end. There's no tomato in the elf village huh. Let's share some and have Nea-san stock it.

Curry huh, I haven't eaten it in a long time. Arisa has also began singing a strange song, "Harahara, hara perape nyon, karakara karu da mon". That seems to be the song of curry.
<TLN: ~~I guess, "Tummytummy, tummy hungryry nyon, emptyempty light damon."~~ Apparently, it's Minami-ke's reference.>

Fortunately, I've acquired the recipe, so I'll just need to ask Nea-san if she has the required spices.
It's beef stew tomorrow. I'll see if Mia can detect the little bit of meat texture and fat on her share tomorrow.

I also need to prepare for the jellyfish extermination, tomorrow will be busy.

9-23. Pests Extermination (3)

Satou's here. Curry's garnishes change all the time, but the soy-sauce pickled Japanese leeks, and red pickled gingers are the standard. Depending on the local specialties or the restaurants, it seems that there are curries that use roasted cucumbers, sauerkraut, and even pickles.
To have so many variations like this, it really is a menu loved by Japanese after all.

◇

"Aze-sama, please be very careful."
"I'm fine, it's not even my first time."

While Lua-san is looking so worried, Aialize-san is full of confidence.

Actually, we're going to start the experiment of locking up the jellyfish with cages.
As expected, I didn't think it was fine for the top of the clan to tag along even if it was just for the formality, but I yielded when they said, "Optimum."

Apparently, the world tree regards high elves as one of its parts. Aialize-san told me that, unlike the case with the jellyfish, the high elves have always been like that from the beginning. I was curios with what she's said, but I was uncertain whether it was fine for an outsider to ask that, so I decided not to.

From Aialize-san's story, she can make the world tree think that several people she's brought together are its parts, but since this is an experiment that involve the use of magic, it's better to have few baggages, so I'm the only one who's going with her to observe the experiment. I'm not complaining since I want to go, but is it fine for Lua-san not to come?

She blushed when I asked her the reason for making me accompany her, so I thought that there was a chance for me, but she told me that a hero who could

battle the black dragon would be fine even if the jellyfish went amok. Please stop with the misleading gestures.

"Sa, err, you have finished your preparation right? Let's go then."

She was going to call my name, but she couldn't do it in the end. Since it's cute, I'll stop such boorish behavior like holding my hand out.

I grasp the hand of the slightly sulky Aialize-san that she has presented. She jumps out to the space while getting panicked for some reason. I also followed her using sky drive at the speed that won't break our joined hands.

Oh, I thought that it was dome made from some kind of glass, but it's some mucus-like membrane instead. I wonder if it's the sap of the world tree? It's about 2 meters thick.

Outside of the membrane is the vacuum--

Umm, Aialize-san? It's painful though?

I cannot breath normally. My face and hair have started to frost. I don't think that I'm going to die so I check my status, my stamina and health have just been decreased by little, and the self-healing seems to be working as they're immediately healed.

I was certain that Aialize-san would use some kind of wind magic. I invoke [Canopy] to create a comfortable space. There's not enough air, so I take out the balloon from my storage, and replenish a little bit of air into the [Canopy]. I'll add oxygen from the balloon if the air become polluted.

Fuh, I breathe a sigh of relief.
It was good that I fill the remaining balloons with air. Even though I made them with the intention of playing with Pochi and Tama, I had forgotten.

>[Spacewalk Skill Acquired]
>[Survival Skill Acquired]

I've got myself some strange skills. I'd have loved ether operation skill instead.
Sky drive is usable in the space, so I've decided that the spacewalk skill is a dead skill. Survival skill seems to be quite convenient, so I allocate it maximum points, and activated it.

"'What's the matter?'"
"'I wasn't able to breathe.'"
"'U~mm, I didn't tell you? You can't breathe in the void sky so, be careful okay.'"

You're late, Aialize-san.

"'And also, you shouldn't use too many magic. There aren't many spirits in the void sky, and the mana is thin so it's hard to recover magic power here.'"
<TLN: So, mana is different from maryoku (magic power) after all, sigh.>

She told me to go to the nearest world tree branch if I need to recover my magic power no matter what. The mana that have been collected by the world tree from the ether seem to be overflowing on its branch. And also, I'm warned to not touch the world tree's branches in the void sky since it might burn me as they're hot. Shouldn't the outer space be cold?

Come to think of it, we're talking normally. It's probably [Telephone] magic, but Aialize-san doesn't have space magic skill, so how is she able to use it?

"'Aialize-sama can use space magic huh.'"
"'I, I've learned this a long time ago, the skill has been lost with time, but I can still use the simpler one even now. If I'm in a place with a lot of spirits, I can also use the difficult ones.'"

I'm intrigued with the "The skill has been lost with time" line that she's said, but since we've gotten closer to the jellyfish, the chatter is over. I'll ask about it while I treat her with omelet rice tonight.

◇

It's huge.

The jellyfish in front of me is the average one at level 30, but it's bigger than even Heiron, the black dragon. It's about three times as big if the feelers are included.

"'First, I'll try with cages from space magic okay.'"

Although Aialize-san said space magic, she's actually chanting spirit magic. It's said that there is no spirit in the void sky, but it seems she has properly brought them along from the observation area earlier. It's the kind of shrewdness that doesn't seem like her at all, but it's most likely the result of many failures in the past. Those situations float on my eyes.

When the magic is finished, six boards appear around a jellyfish, the next moment, a cage with six boards appears.
The feelers that are too long to get inside the cage are cleanly cut and wriggle in the void sky. They're gradually moving away in the air, it's probably going to fall after the gravity pulls it.
I collect the feelers that have been caught on the world tree branches with [Magic Hand] to one place. And then I put them into the storage. The parts that have been cut don't seem to be living beings.

The jellyfish that has been caught is struggling in the cage, but the others jellyfish aren't reacting. The world tree is also silent of course.

Next, we move to near different jellyfish and put two of them into nature magic and light magic cages each.
Either magic can catch the jellyfish without any problem just like with the space magic. Fire, shadow, darkness, and gravity magic also have some capturing magic, but they seem to also deal damage, so we don't use them this time.

We tried to use Earth, Water, and Wind magic just in case, but since there are no [Water], [Air], and [Ground] in the void sky, these magic need more magic power than usual. In addition, its compositions seem to have weakened, as the jellyfish quickly absorbed the cages made from these three elements.

This jellyfish is very weak individually.
In fact, three of the jellyfish that had escaped the cages couldn't come close when I caught them with my [Magic Hand]. They're absorbing the [Magic Hand] but it takes quite some time to break it.

It's troublesome to manage them all the time so Aialize-san makes them sleep with wind magic. We confirmed that they wouldn't pursuit us if we took some distances away before they awoke.

While we were doing all that, the [Nature], and [Light] magic cages were destroyed.
The former took about two hours, while the latter continued on until about three hours. The first [Space] magic cages that has been made is still in good health even after five hours have elapsed now.

◇

However, you're good high elf-sama.
I'm sorry for thinking that you were just a piece of junk elf in my mind. I didn't think that she could use such varied magic like these.

We had some free time while we wait for the [Nature], and [Light] magic cages broke, so I did various experiments after I asked for the permission from Aialize-san.

First, the [Bug Wiper]. Unfortunately, it has no effect. They're not bugs after all. I tried getting close to the jellyfish and used magic, but I could use it

without any problem. Aialize-san looked lightly surprised, so it was probably not normal. I feel that the MP consumption has increased for a tiny bit when I use magic.

I was panicking when the [Dry] magic almost damaged the jellyfish for more than 30% of its health, but I avoided the problem as I canceled the magic halfway.

Next, I'll try elementary level attack magic. First, I try to fire [Remote Arrow], and [Short Stun]. I thought that they would disappear when they got close to the jellyfish, but they didn't, unlike the time with the wild boar king. The remote arrow normally damaged it, and the short stun made a gaping hole on it rather than fainting it. They're fragile just like how they look, I need to be more careful.

I'm intrigued with the [Magic-made artificial living beings] talk from the other day, so I ask Aialize-san to give a performance of it.

"U~n, I can't afford the magic power, so just do with a simple one okay."

Contrary to her half-hearted words, she's chanting the magic with quite proud-looking face.
Wait, Aialize-san? Your MP is decreasing greatly you know?

"....■■ Magic Beast King Creation (Create Behemoth)"

A magic circle is formed in the void sky, and a creature that seem to be a mix of an elephant and a hippo appears from it. It's only half as big as the jellyfish, but it looks extremely strong on the outside. Its level is 50, its body is about as big an average destroyer.

However, this Behemoth-kun does not have wings.
It fell, pulled by the gravity, and it seemed to have been annihilated after leaving a red light far beyond.

"....■■ Magic Light Ball Creation (Create Wisp)"

Aialize-san made another artificial life in order to avoid my glance. It can fly this time. The wisp that has appeared is only about 10 centimeters long in diameter, and it's floating about while emitting faint white light.

The wisp is moving toward the jellyfish.
After the wisp gets to a certain range, it loses its outline and disappears. I see the base end of the jellyfish feelers absorbing the remaining light.

I continue on with physical attacks experiment.

The fairy sword cuts the feelers without any resistance, its body is fragile after all. The Ant Javelin that I've filled with magic power and thrown at the jellyfish is unexpectedly caught by its feelers skillfully and got eaten. It looks to be practically easy to poison them.

The last one is [Bell of Fear] magic tools.
This magic tool isn't one that's made in present days, so I don't know the (menu) explanation. I can guess from the flow of the words I can read, but I'm not confident I can use it well. I was able to somehow identify the Command Word, so I thought that I should just try it.

"'Be afraid of me.'"

Oouu.
The jellyfish around 3 kilometers range of effect are attacking with electricity and feelers like they've gone mad. I carry Aialize-san with princess hug, and escape outside the electricity attacks.

As we have arranged beforehand, Aialize-san is going to put the jellyfish to sleep with wind magic--or at least that was plan. She's only saying, 'Au au' while blushing and not using magic. That reminds me, I've forgotten that she's someone who can't deal with close physical contact.

After leaving Aialize-san floating in a safety zone, I hurry back to where the jellyfish are.

I thought that the world tree was going to attack, but it seems to be okay as the jellyfish healths are still alright. I cut the feelers of the jellyfish that are tangling the world tree with the fairy sword, and leave only the body parts.

Next I put the three bodies-only jellyfish in physical cages that I've taken out off the storage. A bulky clay cage made with earth magic, a bronze cage, and the last is a transparent ice cage. Even though I've made them with various big sizes, the largest one is still barely enough.

I've used magic during their creations, but there's no trace of magic on them left now.

The bronze cage is smaller than the other two, so it's impossible to shove the jellyfish into it. They're too big to not even fit the 4LDK size. It can't be helped, I put another in the second ice cage I've made.

I thought that the jellyfish will immediately break through the ice cage, but there doesn't seem to be any problem.
Aialize-san and me go back to the observatory while sweeping the jellyfish feelers that have caught the world tree.

I leave Jia-san and the others to observe the time needed for the space magic cage, the ice magic cage, and the earth cage to break. If either of the physical cage can hold the jellyfish for a day, even the elves alone can probably deal with the pests.

As an apology and to soothe high elf-sama, I made the most delicious omelet rice. The fluffy egg wraps the chicken race that's filled with the fat from the fried chicken skin, put together with crispy chicken skin, paprikas, and green peas-like beans.
When Arisa made a request for me to draw a heart with the ketchup on her omelet rice, everyone asked me the same. Pochi's and Tama's shares are drawn with simple pictures of them. Mia and Aialize-san look very envious when they see those illustrations, but please bear with it. Eat them before it cool down.

There is a reason why I've not made curry.
I've acquired 80% of the spices from the duchy capital, and gathered the remaining 20% from Boruenan forest.

But, there is no soy-sauce pickle.

To not have soy-sauce pickle even though there are leeks!
Like this, it lacks the finishing touch. To obtain the last piece, I came back to the duchy capital under the cover of the night.

9-24. The Search at the Duchy Capital

Satou's here. I sometimes see wonderful urban legends where the character in tales or stories wakes up beside an unfamiliar opposite sex who's sleeping nearby, but it's never happened upon me in reality. However, it's a common spectacle in the other world....

◇

I feel my face is wrapped in soft sensations, it feels wasteful to wake up now. Ah, bliss. However, this sensation isn't Nana's, and Lulu's aren't these big. Don't tell me, has Aialize-san intruded?

In case of the last one, it'll be bad if I don't wake up soon, so I escape from dozing off.

Huh? I don't know this room.

Half of my view is a soft body wrapped in unbleached cotton, and the other half is reflecting unfamiliar furnitures in a narrow room. I can smell cheap alcohol mixed among the faint smell of sweat.

Right, I remember now.

"Onee-chan! It's morning."
"Wake up quick. I'm hungry~"
"Starving nano~"

I lightly wave my hand to the little children who have intruded the room. Oops, I've made the wrong choice. I should have clung to the ceiling and activated hiding skills when the door opened.

"Wa~ Futsuna-ane has brought along a young man~"
"Mom, onee is being loose!"

"Onii-chan, are you going to make Futsuna your bride?"

The children is making noise like a beehive that's been poked.
I'm a bit worried with some of the remarks, so I check my clothes and my body just in case. Yup, it's safe. We've only slept together. Since I've been journeying together with Arisa, it feels strange to have the check become the norm.

Last night, I slipped into the duchy capital in the dead of the night, but it was so late no inn was open. I have a lot of acquaintances in the duchy capital, but it would be bad manner to suddenly visit them in the middle of the night, so, as it can't be helped, yes reluctantly so, I was walking to search for a bed at the night town, but--

Even though it was supposed to be a fun nightlife, I unexpectedly got involved in a little quarrel.

It's just an ordinary quarrel in a night town. A spell-user woman on her late 20s with slightly big breasts was being extorted by a criminal group called [Grey Bat] for her stall. That was it. They were going to sexually assault her since she didn't want to pay the fee, so I intervened as there was no way I could leave it alone. That spell-user woman was Futsuna-san.

I led the criminal group toward the patrolling guard ahead, and when they got close, I quickly handled them with [Magic Hand]. It seems that the members of the criminal group who tried to attack the guards were put into the jail. There were some who tried to escape, but since I caught their feet with [Magic Hand], every one of them seemed to have been captured.

I kept a tense distance while I was leading the criminal group, so Futsuna-san fainted immediately after the guards helped. It couldn't be helped, so I carried her to her house at the housing complex, but I encountered the prostitutes women who seem to be her acquaintances. They seemed to have just finished their works and come home.

And then, after they humorously made fun about Futsuna-san, I told them

that I saved her from [Grey Bat] extortion, and Futsuna-san told them that those guys were all arrested by the guards, then the prostitutes onee-san raised cheers of joy. They seemed to be a group of good-for-nothing who leeched on the streetwalkers.

They were originally led by a decent man, but he was seriously injured by the demon rampage at the downtown that occurred before I got to the duchy capital, so his influence decreased and the [Grey Bat] started to do as they please.

Anyway, the party to celebrate the annihilation of [Grey Bat] begun, and it became an all-night drinking bout. I couldn't get drunk, so the prostitutes onee-san who got worked up made me drink cheap liquor in large quantity while glued to me. It was absurd to even compare the liquor to the one that I drank with the black dragon, but it was tasty for some reason. It was truly a fun feast.

I'm worried with the women's finances since we drank quite a lot of liquor. It would be boorish of me if I give them money for the liquor expenses, I guess I'll put some Shiga liquor in a suitable barrel and give it to them later.

I slip out of Futsuna-san whose soft body holds my head, and get up off the bed.

My feet has stepped on some kind of soft things. Since I can hear, "Ahn", soft voice, I look down. The prostitutes onee-san who drank together with me are buried under the empty bottles of the liquor.

I apologize to Futsuna-san's mother for the drinking bout last night. I secretly used [<<Secret Field>>] magic so it should have been quiet, but I should apologize with a few words here. She forgives me while saying that it's just like usual, and also, "If you're fine with middle-aged woman who's late at getting married, please get along well with her." while laughing. U~n, she (Futsuna) can't be called a beauty, but she looks plainly cute with her make-up-less face and shoulder-length red hair, there should be some men who fall for her inside their minds.

After having the seaweed and grain soup that Futsuna-san's mother had made, I left the housing complex I had spent the night in.

◇

Now then, first I need to go to viscount Shimen's scroll workshop.
I changed my clothes in an alley, picked a horse-drawn carriage cab on its pool near the great wall, and went to the scroll workshop.

"Chevalier-sama! You've returned faster than I thought."
"Yes, I have some unreasonable things I need Natalina-san do."

I cut to the chase with Natalina-san in the drawing room of the workshop.
I came here to request them to make new magic scrolls for exterminating jellyfish and crafting things at the elf hometown. There are eight elementary magic, and four intermediate ones. In addition, I earnestly ask them to take out various [Dodge Monsters] type of nature magic of the storeroom. There is [Dodge Marine Mammal] among them, so I'm expecting it to be effective against the jellyfish.

"U~n, the two space magic among this twelve scrolls are not possible. There's no one that can use space magic this advanced. Formerly, there was someone who could, but that person had been invited to become a teacher at the royal capital academy."

Hoo, it's not like there isn't anyone huh. However, I wonder if it's alright for her to leak the scroll-making technology.

"Is it not possible to ask for that person's help?"
"That girl won't cooperate unless it interests her. She should be neglecting her teaching duty even now, she's said that she's going to make a holy sword that surpasses Gjallarhorn in her sleep."

Natalina-san is sighing grandly in appalled tone.
Fumu, a holy swords creator huh. Then I wonder if I can use the dragon powder as an exchange?

"Can I get the cooperation of that researcher if I offer this material as an exchange?"

I put a vial on the table while talking.

"This is?"
"It's dragon powder."
"Do you understand the implication?"

That reminds me, the fact that dragon powder is a material for making a holy sword is a highly classified information in Shiga kingdom. Work hard [Poker Face] skill.

"Unfortunately, I don't know the detail. A long time ago, I was told by an acquaintance that, 'If you get a hold of dragon powder, bring it to the royal capital.' When I ask for the reason, he only said that it had something to do with 'Holy swords.'"

The deception skill shiningly assists after a long absence. Common stories flash in my mind one after another.

"Tell you what, Chevalier-sama. Don't talk to such thoughtless person okay. Some dangerous people of the kingdom might set their eyes on you if you're careless."

Natalina-san is warning me so while she opens the dragon powder vial and checks the inside. This dragon powder is made from the scale fragments of Heiron the black dragon. The scale is big in itself, but the volume increases greatly when it's made into powder, I've made 120 vials from fragments that seem to form one piece (of scale). One vial should be about 10 gold coins worth if I'm not mistaken, so it's quite a fortune.
The property of dragon powder differs for the outer circumference, the

surface, and the inside of the scale. The dragon powder that I've taken out is made from the fiber of the interior of the scale that makes the most quantity. Of course I didn't forget to change my name to Nanashi when I was making the dragon powder.

"The maid over there! Call gramp Jang here. Tell him, 'Come, if you want the chance to analyze high grade dragon powder'!"

The overly excited Natalina-san told the maid who had come to add tea to my cup to do an errand, and the maid got out of the room.

"Chevalier-sama! Where did you get this! No, that's not it. That's not it. Do you only have one of this? Do you have the fiber part from before it's turned into powder?"

She's too excited, her words are collapsing.
I've gathered many broken scales, and sorted the damaged scales to be on its own, there are three of them. However, what is she going to use them?

"The fiber part is it?"
"Yeah, I've read about a man who created advanced magic scroll from a book at the royal library, that man seems to use a writing brush made from dragon's whiskers."

Whiskers huh~? Heiron the black dragon has whiskers, but I don't think that thick whisker can be used as a writing brush.

Natalina-san also knew about that.
I'm told that she and her friends went to hunt dragon's whisker at the labyrinth city 150 years ago. What a rash person. The whisker they sought seem to be from lower dragon's, but even so, it was still too thick to be used as a writing brush. I asked if they defeated the lower dragon, but she replied with a bitter smile saying that driving it away was the best they could do. Nevertheless, they still acquired a lot of scales, and it was profitable enough that the party members at that time who also worked in a magic workshop called [Ivy Mansion] could set up a base at the labyrinth city.

Back to the story, from that experience, she's been thinking that the material for the writing brush might be the fiber from the whisker after all. She shouted toward the ceiling that she was not making scrolls back then, so she ignored it. Calm down.
In fact, the elf who was the leader at that time made a high-powered living doll from the fiber taken from the scales. I want to meet that elf, I feel that we will get along well.

Looks like the chance for me to take out the dragon whisker, or rather, the dragon fiber from the storage has been lost.

"W, where is it Natalina! The best dragon powder is thisssss!

At the speed that didn't match his obese body, Jang-shi, the workshop head took the dragon powder on the table and stared at it. He's probably checking it with his [Item Check] skill.

"Ooh! Ooooh! It's a high-grade no mistake. It's dragon powder made from the scale of a genuine dragon, an old dragon nonetheless, it's not from something like a lower dragon. Isn't this the phantom item that appeared only once at Seryuu city 40 years ago! Unununu, I don't know the creator. There's no mistake that this is made by a very skilled alchemist! Natalina!"

I thought that he was a more composed person, but he's quite an interesting one. He's fit to be Natalina-san's superior.

"Chevalier-sama, w, would you be so kind as to concede this?! You would wouldn't you!?"

Jang-shi bloodshot eyes are scary. Ah, please don't hurl your saliva.
If it's like this, I'll ask something a bit unreasonable.

"If you comply with the unreasonable request that I've told Natalina-san earlier, I will present it."
"What?! Are you sure? No, you're sure right? Do as you wish with this old

woman. Yes, in exchange for this flat chest--gwowah"

Natalina-san who can't put up with the sexual harassment remarks body-blows Jang-shi. He's fainted, but Natalina-san probably held back, if she seriously hit him, there would be a wind tunnel on Jang-shi's stomach.

"In other words, if we can complete the scrolls from earlier with the shortest time right."
"Yes."

Natalina-san is laughing while having a carnivorous smile like she's before a prey.
Thanks to the effect of [Poker Face] I didn't get swallowed by her smile, and succeeded with the negotiation. Natalina-san was trying to get another vial of the dragon powder for the researcher at the royal capital.

However, I won't hesitate to make a dragon writing brush if it can really be used to make advanced level magic scrolls. I'll ask the elves if there is anyone who can make it at the elf hometown.

◇

After I've finished the business at the scroll workshop and greeted Hayuna-san and the others, I return to deal with my original purpose. I tried to search for pickles like I did with the short horns during the map search last night, but I couldn't find it. The name must be different.

I went to visit the duke castle head chef as the my remaining hope.

9-25. The Search at the Duchy Capital (2)

Satou's here. I hadn't think about it when I was in the former world, but I didn't think just how the things I usually ate were made or from what ingredients they were. It feels very real after I come to another world.

◇

"Hello, it has been a while."
"Ou, if it isn't young master Satou. Long time no see."
"It's been a long time, chevalier Pendragon-sama."

The head chef-san who welcomes me while smiling is bad with polite speech like usual. He looks fit to be someone who's wearing an armor and wielding a great sword on a battlefield, but he's one of the five people in Shiga kingdom that can make the delicate imperial dishes. Another one of them is that head chef's support, the slender young man chef.

The maid-san who's guided me to this room is waiting close to the wall with face full of expectation, today I'm not here to cook though.

As souvenirs, I take out the dragon spring liquor and brownie wine from my bag. The brownie wine isn't something that rare in the market, so I probably won't be find out. On the other hand, the dragon spring liquor is completely unknown in the market, so even if it's analyzed, they should think that it's made in a minor sake brewery.

"Are the wine and the other one both Shiga liquors?"
"I'm sorry chevalier-sama, please don't mind him."
"No, it's alright. I found some unusual liquors during my journey, so I thought that I should bring some to everyone."

Actually, in exchange for tempura jelly recipes, they taught me various things like the way to decorate vegetables, or make shaped candies. The character

bento for Pochi and the others are some of the result.

I get down to business after we're done with the pleasantry.

"Red pickles huh? I don't know no soy sauced pickles, but pickled peach and salted lulu should be red, they are."
"Let's see, pickled carrots and fruits that are related to gabo are also red, but they're more like orange if I have to say."

Unfortunately, neither of them are aware of soy sauced pickles.
They're mentioning various red pickles, but I've never come across Japanese radish in the duchy capital in the first place. Due to that, I'm out of radish stock since I've been using them for the Japanese-style hamburg steak. I've also made grated radish too many times for the grilled fish dishes, so I guess it's not strange for me to run out of stock huh?

"If you know the ingredient, why don't ye' make some yerself?"
"I understand that it uses Japanese radish, and lotus root, but there's some flavoring that I'm not sure."

I think it uses salt and vinegar, but I don't remember what creates that red color at all. It's not from coloring agent right?

"There's no one who cultivate radish round here 'fter all."
"There's a legend from long ago that says orcs will come if you plant radish, though it's just a superstition. It should be cultivated around the territories of earl Kuhanou, and earl Seryuu."

It's hopeless if there's no radish.
I thanked the two, and decided to go back. The maid who was waiting near the wall looked really disappointed, but I secretly gave her one bag of baked sweets while saying, "It's a secret okay." I've been giving them to the pixies and the elves everyday, so I don't have many in hands.

◇

It'll be too conspicuous to go to the territories of earl Kuhano or Seryuu if it's not in the night, so I've decided to pay my acquaintances some visits.

I came to the airship workshop before I got out of the duke castle, and presented some brownie wine to the workshop head. This was not because I skimped the dragon spring liquor of course. Even though his red face looks like someone that can hold his liquor, he's not good with strong liquor, so I didn't give him that one. The brownie has only 10-30% alcohol degree on top of being sweet and easy to drink.

While being careful as to not make it unnatural, I ask about the way to control the aerodynamic engine, but it seems the engines that are in the duchy capital all only use fins that have identical output. He grumbled that because of that, sometimes new aerodynamic engines aren't made even after there are monstrous fish that have been subjugated. Even the second-hand aerodynamic engine that's been serviced from the other day is being keep as a spare for the engine in operation today.

"Is Satou-dono familiar with a country called Talbia."

What's with that beer-loving-like country name.

"It's a country southwest of the Parion holy country that's located past the desert of death on the western part of the kingdom, they make small airships called floating pot that a person can ride."

The workshop head moves his pen on a paper, and draws simple structure of the thing.
It looks like a hanged caterpillar falling from sea of acid. How do I say this, if we leave out the landing legs, it looks like a sake jug. There are small fins on the bottom of that pot, those fins rotate along with the pedestal, and equalize buoyancy it seems.
Shiga Kingdom seemed to have tried to imitate them, but it ended up just like it did for me in the other day; it couldn't even fly, and did serious damage

instead.
It seems they had investigated that the thing might be convenient for scoutings, but concluded that the birdkin were better for it.
The workshop head isn't thinking about the floating pot, but whether the mechanism of the pot can be applied to the big airship.

"Oh right, has Satou-dono heard the thing about the prince from before?"

The workshop head-san who knew about my quarrel with the third prince told me about various news concerning him casually. The third prince seems to have retired from the holy knight with illness as an excuse, he has also lost his right to the throne, and got confined in the imperial villa at the back country that's under direct control of the royal family.

Honestly, I had forgotten the things about the prince, but I thanked the workshop head-san's kindness nonetheless.

◇

Seems like Orion-kun wouldn't like it if I visited him, so I splendidly ignored him. I'll just send him a letter of apology for not showing my face later.

First, I stopped by the mansion of the previous earl Walgock whom I'm indebted with while bringing some brownie wine and gold crafted music box that I had made together with the elves. It's a normal spring type music box, not a magic tool.

I leave without taking too much time, and head toward marquis Lloyd's mansion this time.

I've received a report from the messenger, whom I've sent earlier, that an appointment has been securely made. Since he's a busy person, I didn't know if I could meet him or not, but since it was not good to postpone the particulars about the arsonist noble from the other day, it was good that I

could meet him sooner than later.

I received a passionate welcome at the mansion of earl Lloyd. To have maids lined up to welcome me in rows ahead the open door, what galge is this? was what I wanted to hear. However, please spare me from being hugged by marquis Lloyd who had waited ahead.

"I don't know how I could ever thank you sir Pendragon."

From marquis Lloyd's story, baronet Poton has voluntarily retired from being the governor of Puta town with the pretext of being ill, and another noble from the marquis' faction has replaced his position.

Seems that the current earl Bobi and marquis Lloyd worked together to deal with the remnants of the Wings of Liberty. Unfortunately, the young noble men committed suicide by taking poison starting from the son of baronet Poton after they had been arrested.

They sure work fast, it's not even been two weeks since then.

"The duke himself has sent a written letter asking for information concerning this marquis Dasles person to Makiwa kingdom, but..."

Since he was being evasive, I waited until he talked. He hesitated to say, "It was an accident without a doubt", that the ship which the arsonist noble had ridden was attacked by large herd of monsters and sunk. Moreover, the monsters ate not only the problematic arsonist noble and his party, but even all the soldiers who had accompanied them.

I see. I should dismiss the "It was an accident" part. If I am to digest it normally, it must be that marquis Lloyd and the current earl Bobi have conspired to get rid of them. Although, I won't mind even if I have to keep silent, since the arsonist noble brought it to himself. Therefore, I only answered with, "It can't be helped since it's an accident."

I added a smile to appeal that I believed him, but marquis Lloyd's face was

pale. Why? He seems to be a busy person after all, he might be tired since his worries pile up.

Marquis Lloyd proposed to give several mines and businesses to me as an apology for this incident. That's really too much, and I won't be able to handle them even if I accept, so I gently decline it.
And then, he also recommends me to become the next viceroy of Mitotogena city which is a trade port located on the great river whose viceroy is going to be replaced next year, but I decline it of course. Something like being a viceroy seems so troublesome, please give that to people who love their social positions.

Afterwards, he tries to give things like jewelries, and maidens--they're little girls with one digit age as expected--to me, but since none fancy me, I continue to decline, and in the end, he asks if I want to become an adopted son of his faction viscounts who don't have a successor.

It appear that he was trying to give me something so that I would not speak, so I asked that if possible, I would like to borrow his treasured magic books if he had one.

I felt slightly bad when I looked at marquis Lloyd's face who looked really relieved. I don't particularly need a gift or an apology, but I'd accept it if he's glad with it.

There are a lot of people among marquis Lloyd's clan who excel at earth magic, so their archive is full of earth magic books.

It would be bad if I took the treasured books by mistake, so I picked severals with the suggestion of the old man butler's recommendation. Since the butler also has earth magic skill, it's probably the most suitable. He's picked about 10 books, and I borrow the five most interesting ones among them. I'll borrow the remaining five books when I come back to return this set. Since there was a map with the placements of the neighboring countries hanged on the archive wall, I took a photograph of it without permission.

Being here too long wasn't good, so I chose the right timing to leave after I had borrowed the books.
I only realized that I could have treated the tired marquis Lloyd with his favorite tempura for dinner after I had gotten out of his mansion.

◇

I was thinking of meeting with Sera, but she was currently training in Tenion temple.
I didn't want to be a nuisance, so I didn't approach Tenion temple, and went to the downtown. I looked for soy sauced pickles among the jeering of the stalls, but I couldn't find it.

When I went to a certain shop that was said to sell red pickles, it turned out to be red turnip pickles. It seems nice to go with rice, but it's not it.

"Masita?"
"Masita, no?"

I was called so from below, I looked down.
Oh, the brother and sister sea lion children who got along well with Nana huh. They look around restlessly while sniffing with their noses. It's cute that they can't say 'master' properly.

"Where is Nana?"
"Nana not here?"

They shake their bodies around me while looking for Nana.
However, I don't think you'd find Nana even if you roll up my trousers' cuffs.

Nana seems to be quite attached to these two. I promised the two to bring Nana along when I come here next time, and give two bags of baked sweets that were reserved for Nana to the two. I see the two children off while they're saying thank you by nodding their heads.

"Young master, won't you buy some pickles?"
"Oo, aunty. You also have a stall open huh."

The one who's called me out is the mother of Futsuna, the spell-user, whose place I've stayed on last night. She's selling pickles made from cucumbers and gourds soaked with soy sauce and mirin. They're quite delicious, or rather, aren't these taste of soy sauced pickles? It's a bit too sour, but it should have tasted like this.

It seems that the one who's taught this recipe to Futsuna's mother is one of the prostitutes onee-san who has participated in the drinking bout last night.

She was selling normal pickles up until then, but her sales improved when she started to sell these Kuhanou pickles. She told me that her profit didn't increase much since the soy sauce and the mirin are expensive, but there weren't any customers who came even while we were talking, so there probably are some regular customers.

Evening of that day, I earnestly implored the prostitute onee-san who has taught Kuhano pickle's recipe to Futsuna's mother. I thought it was going to be a difficult negotiation, but she immediately replied that she would teach me. She taught me an arrangement of her hometown's recipes since she was born in Kuhanou territory. Seems that It was originally a recipe for pickle of circle radish that is specialty product of Kuhanou territory. Since she murmured, "I want to eat Kuhanou-style pickle.", I would buy her some radish while I'm buying for me.

I gave her several gold coins as a thank for teaching me the recipes which made her lose her work time. Her pride seemed to have been incited by that, and I got to be flooded by the baptism of her techniques until late at night.

I left the housing complex after I had confirmed that the kiss marks have gone with [Self-Healing].

Now then, let's fly to the radish producing area--earl Kuhanou territory

during the night!

9-26. Nostalgic Place

Satou's here. Rodeo machine was popular as a way to speed up diet at one time, but do people's households still use it now? My house bought one, but it became a frame to hang laundry before even a month had passed.

◇

I leave the duchy capital under the cover of the night darkness.

After I had gained high enough altitude with Sky Drive, I accelerated in one go with [Air Cannon]. I continuously spread Flexible Shields to act as wings. In order to get lifting power, I stack several Flexible Shields to make it look like wings. The shape might be far from being optimum, but maybe thanks to me using [Air Control], MP consumption is lower than when I only use Sky Drive, and it's harder to lose my speed.

After approximately one hour, I've arrived at the grapevine mountain range near the Phantom Firefly Cavern of Oak.
It's probably faster if I go through the cavern, but I'd like to gather some oak ores for glass-making, and carbonated water during the trip over the mountain range.

The oak ore mine of the duchy itself is located two kilometers to the west of the Phantom Firefly Cavern. According to the map, around 20 kilometers to the east in the mountain, there is a place for mining oak ores. There's also a place where I can get silica a bit deeper from it, so I'll go there.

I quickly create holes by using earth magic, and harvest the raw materials to the storage. There are terribly lots of underground insects on my feet. It was good that I noticed it halfway through, and took refuge to the air. If it was Arisa who hated insects, she'd be faint with bubbles on her mouth.

Contrasting to the name of the mountain range, grapevine, far from having grapes, there is barely any fruit on this mountain. I wonder if it was the center of grapes production during the era of the orcs?

There are phantom beasts called [Sky Deer (Amagica)] on this mountain. I ignored it since I was on the ship back then, but since I wanted to meet it once, I went to it.

This sky deer has a racial ability that's similar to Sky Drive.
Yes, those deers run in the sky.

However, it seems they ran faster on the ground as the herd with 10 deers were running on the mountain when I found it. To be running in the middle of the night like this, I wonder if my mining activity have surprised them?

The male sky deers have more imposing horns than a moose, but they look like normal deers beside that. The leader-like sky deer is about three meters tall, but other than that, it looks like the other sky deers.

I wonder if they'd fly~?
I was thinking like that while floating in the sky several hundreds meters away from the sky deer herd, but I quickly moved my body in accordance to crisis perception skill that suddenly kicked in.

The leader sky deer lunged with great speed right at that time.

Flames are blowing on the hoofs of the sky deer. If we look at its legs that aren't burned, we might think think that it wasn't hot.

That sky deer charges at me many times, but since I have the ground shrink as my trump card, I continue to avoid it for certain. Apparently, leader-kun was acting as a decoy as the sky deers that were on the ground had escaped.

After splendidly evading the sky deer for several times, I sneaked behind it by using ground shrink, and landed on its back. It was involuntary since I felt slightly mischievous.

The sky deer is jumping up and down in rage in the sky as if it's gone mad.

I had ridden on a rodeo game once, so thanks to that, or not, I managed this without much hardships. No, it might be because my horse-riding is at MAX.

Nevertheless, it seems that the sky deer always moves its head up whenever it hits the ground, maybe it's its instinct. It should do a somersault since it can fly anyway. The deer seems to think that I won't get off if it's just rampaging around, it decides to plunge into the tree groves. I wouldn't let it got hurt because of my little prank, so I put Flexible Shields in front of the sky deer to prevent it from getting hurt. When we got close to the ground, I used [Magic Hands] to pin the sky deer down.

When the sky deer had became quiet, I gave it some water to calm it down. Come to think of it, I have the [Tamer] title, should have set it.

>[Taming Skill Acquired]
>[Animal Training Skill Acquired]

>Title [Sky Deer Rider] Acquired

Now then, since I've unexpectedly bullied the sky deer, I will exterminate some monsters that look threatening to them as an apology. Beside the leader, it's probably dangerous for the herd to go against [War Mantis], and [Spider Bear].

Let's put the flexible sword that I've just acquired at the scroll workshop yesterday to use. It's a magic that use flexible shield not to defend, but to attack. I can make up to 16 blades, and extend as far as [Magic Hand] does.

I approach the war mantises and spider bears that I've marked on the map from the sky, and quickly mow them down with flexible swords from the air. I catch the defeated monsters with [Magic Hand], and put them into the storage.

There are still few war mantises left, but there's no problem even if I don't annihilate them.

I rise along the surface of the mountain range, change to level flight when I reach high altitude, and leave behind the duchy territory.

◇

When I've come at the sky of the slightly nostalgic baron Muno territory, I'll look at the state of Muno city's development, and confirm how many houses have been built on the reclaimed land of Totona and the others along the way. As expected, people look like dots at this altitude without the farseeing skill.

I was intending to just pass through it, but since the number of thief on baron Muno territory hadn't decreased much, I hunted them until dawn.

I'm in Nanashi silver mask mode this time. It's the phantom figure who has defeated the demon of Muno city.

I approach the thieves hideout from the air, and incapacitate them with [Remote Stun] from outside. I carry the the unconscious thieves with [Magic Hand] by floating them, and transport the arrested thieves in bundles to the front of Muno city.

By using earth magic, I make some stone pillars in front of Muno city, and tie the thieves with ivies. Conveniently, the guards of Muno city seem to have low morale, as they're sleeping on duty. How hopeless.

I did such roundup works repeatedly until the sky was turning white.
The safety of the highway will be quite better with this, but it looks like a new urban legend will be born. It's a good medicine for the guards who sleep like a log.

While hiding myself, I peek at Totona and the others at the reclaimed land,

I'm glad that their food situation is better than I've thought. It seems Nina-san has distributed the foodstuffs from the duchy capital back then.

◇

As the result of the side trip, I got to the Kuhanou earldom as the day dawned. I fly at the course where I won't meet people on low altitude, make a landing near Nouki town, and walk toward there on foot. I get a lift on a wagon I've encountered on the crossroad, and enter the town. When I entered the town, I used the commoner ID that I had made in Seryuu city.

I help the old man who have let me ride with him to unload his wagon as a thank.

"Huh? Is this a round radish?"
"No, this is long round radish. There won't be round radishes before the winter come."

Now that you mention it, it's slightly elliptic. Since it was just right, I bought a bagful of long round radishes.
There was a shop nearby which sold lotus roots, so I also bought a bagful of the roots there. The lotus root is unexpectedly cheaper than the radish. It seems to be cheap since the lotus root are not cultivated, and instead picked in the wild.

I asked around the people on the stalls, but none were selling Kuhanou pickles. Ever since the public order of baron Muno territory has worsened, merchants who come from the duchy territory to sell Mirin disappear, so they can't make it even if they want to.

Damn you demons, it's your guys' fault huh.

They said that the general store which had bought flavorings and pickles from long ago might still have some stock left, so I decided to look there.

It's a bit annoying to carry the groceries I've bought, so I ask the old man's permission to put it behind his stall.

"Hello."
"Ye~s, welcom~e."

Huh? Wasn't this store supposed to have an old woman attending?
The one who's keeping the store is a before-20 years old woman without make-up.

"I'd like to have some Kuhanou pickles, do you have some?"
"Ah, Kuhanou pickles is it, we've ran out of stock, but please wait a bit."

Regrettable, out of stock huh.
The onee-san clerk is calling out, "Obaa-chan", toward the store's back.

"What is it, your voice is loud."
"This customer wants to have some Kuhanou pickles."
"The store is out of stock."
"Aren't there some that Obaa-chan has pickled last month."
"Those ones used the relatively expensive mirin, so we can't sell it at the store's price."

For an instant, I thought that the two were doing a little play to raise the price, but it seems that the aunty honestly didn't want to sell it.

I said that I had visited here with some great effort, so I would buy it even if it was expensive. Although she said expensive, one potful of around 500 grams heavy was two silver coins. I tried to sample it before buying it, and even though it tasted somewhat different, it was soy-sauced pickles without a doubt. I'd buy it even if it was two gold coins.

Mission Complete.

◇

Now, then since it's going to take five days at the fastest to make the additional scrolls, I decide to go back to the elf hometown at once. I got close to the duchy capital along the way, so I put one small pot of around 100 grams of Kuhanou pickles to a small bowl and gave it to the prostitute onee-san who gave me the information.

I arrived at the house inside Boruenan tree when it was very late at night.

With the help of the recipe memo, I compounded the curry powder. It was easily completed than I thought. However, I'm not confident if yellow curry will be accepted, so I begin to experiment some arrangement if I can make curry with different color.

It keeps not becoming the color of curry I want, so I make some home-made soy-sauced pickles and put it in the item box as a change of pace.

When I've successfully made the color of curry powder I want, I mass produce them enough for the ingredients I have in hand, and put it in the storage. Curry has many uses in itself, so it's not going to be a problem even if I make a lot.

Since my body smelled like curry, I used deodorant magic, and went to bed. I can probably sleep for about three hours from now. I fell asleep while feeling pleasantly fatigued.

9-27. Pests Extermination (4)

Satou's here. During the time when games were sold in ROM cartridges and CDs, master up (game development deadline) = development is over. Nowadays, there are works to be done for version upgrade, so there is no finish line, it's hard. It's the most troubling when a work comes for something that I've forgotten.

◇

I'm pulled from my sleep by the sensation of hair tickling my noses.
This must be Mia.

Let me sleep for a bit more.
I catch Mia while fumbling and hug her to stop her prank.

Huh~?
It's different. It's not Mia. Someone who moans "Au au" must be high elf-sama. Mia can't put out this soft feeling.

I'll likely be judged guilty like this, but my reasoning can't be restored enough to release these hands. Dozing off while enjoying the wonderful sensations and the cute voices, I return to the blissful sleep once again.

◇

"Wake up~!"
"Mwu."
"Master, it's morning. Umm, please wake up."

I wake up from the slightly deep sleep by the sensations of getting my hair and cheek pulled.

"I've conjectured that his fatigue is high. To rest please."
"It's certainly very rare for master to wake up late, he must be quite tired."

Liza and Nana are voicing their worries. It's alright, I'm only sleepy, give me another five minutes. No, please let me sleep for just another 10 minutes.

"Tired~?"
"Should I call Zena nodesu?"

What are you calling Zena-san for?

"Mwu, Aaze."
"That's right, erofu. How long are you going to enjoy it, get awayy~"
"Uu, I mean, I mean, I can't move ndamon. It can't be helped. I mean, I can't move ndamon."

For some reason, Mia and Arisa are angry to Aialize-san. Did she empty another can of sweets in secret again?

Come to think of it, Aialize-san's voice sure is close.
I slightly open my eyes, and there's the reddened face of Aialize-san before me. Wait, isn't it too close?

"Good morning."
"G, good morning."

What kind of situation is this.

There's Aialize-san on top of my body that's sleeping on bed. I can see Arisa and Mia on my view, so it's probably not in the middle of an attack.

"How long are you going to hug, get separated already~"
"Satou."

Arisa and Mia grab my hands and move it. Huh? Did I capture Aialize-san

when I was half-asleep?

"Please excuse me for this."
"N, no, you were half-asleep after all, it, it can't be helped!"

Even after she's escaped from my restraint, Aialize-san can't quite get up, so I help her sit on the bed.

Arisa and Mia are holding guilty festival until after I get up. Please give some leniency since I was half-asleep.

◇

"And so, have you accomplished your objective at the duchy capital?"
"Yeah, perfectly."

I've acquired the soy-sauced pickles, and perfected the adjustment of curry powder!
For some reason, Arisa's gazes are cold.

I'd likely get told, "Seiza", if I tell her the detail about the soy-sauced pickles, so I show her a glimpse of the scrolls I've obtained from the scroll workshop.

I did contact you several times with [Telephone] magic from duchy capital didn't I. The range for this magic seems to depend on the skill level as [Telephone] from Arisa didn't reach me since it was too far.

Looks like the breakfast is pseudo-french breads.
On top of having no vanilla essence, the bread was hard so it felt lacking. I wanted to eat breads since we always eat rice lately.

"Do you like soft bread more?"
"Why don't you ask Kua? You haven't asked the way to make natural yeast?"

Oh, soft bread seems to exist.
That reminds me, we've always eaten my dishes, so we haven't tasted the local cuisines of elf hometown. I'll ask Mia's mother to teach me and Lulu some recipes next times.

◇

Lua-san who has come here after the breakfast is going to tell the result of observation on the observatory. Since they don't want to publicize the matter about jellyfish, I lead her to the parlor instead of the living room. Lua-san isn't the only who tags along, Aialize-san whose face is still burning also follows.

"--and so, the ice cage lasted for half a day, and the stone cage lasted for two days, before the jellyfish escaped from them. The cages from the space magic of Aialize-sama are going strong even now for both the intermediate and advanced ones."

Fumu, space magic barrier is powerful after all. I checked the number of elves that can use space magic cages to Lua-san, but it seems that only Aialize-san and one of the elder can use it among those who are awake. There are only about 100 people who can do that even if we count the ones sleeping.

"However, the sleeping ones won't want to be counted among it."
"Why is that? Since it's the world tree's crisis, they shouldn't complain even if we wake them up right?"
"They are people who have chosen to sleep in order not to forget their memories."

I can't quite comprehend Lua-san's word. Lua-san seems to have guessed it as she begins to talk about the detail a bit more.

It seems that elves encode old information every 1000 years.

In my vocabulary, it's probably like changing [Episodic Memory] into [Declarative Memory]. Simply put, after a millennium has passed, [Memory] is irreversibly changed into [That short word called 'Memory'] it seems.
Of course the [Semantic Memory] seems to also be consolidated, but since there's no elf who does research to the point that it'll become a problem, this is omitted.

Thus, the elves who don't want to lose their memories no matter what are put to a long sleep. The place where those elves sleep look more like a cemetery than beds. It's caskets rather than cradles huh.

Of course there are also way to make the memory remain by force with magic, but the memory becomes disorderly and can't maintain its integrity, the elf who does so becomes emotionally unstable, and so there is no one who undergoes it without approval from the elders assembly.

It's difficult to live long huh.

"The seven high elves will be fine even if they wake up though. Those kids are sleeping because they 『Got tired』."

The high elves can entrust their memories to the world tree, so their memory won't be deteriorated. However, they won't be able to remember if they are not connected to the world tree, so it's not like it's all-mighty.

"Even though I've never directly met them in person, there seem to be high elves who hate every race beside elf, and some radical ones, so please think the way without waking them up if possible."
"I~guess, like Iflueze will absolutely say, 『Huhh? Pests you say? Just burn those things. Kuhahaha, it's a festival!』, and then proceeds to continuously fire 『DEL Inferno』 to make big fires."

I see, it doesn't seem to be the specialty of Biroanan clan.

Lua-san seems to pretend that Aialize-san's insider story doesn't exist, as she

coughs to clear her throat, and returns to the topic.
The results about the matter that I asked the elder to inquire back then seemed to have come.

"First, they had tried investigating substances that the jellyfish hate, but they couldn't discover it. They can't find attracting substance beside mana. The jellyfish seemed to be attracted to magic tools that had been filled with MP and artificial life-forms like wisp, as they tried to reach it with their feelers when those closed in. However, to peel them off the world tree means that we need MP that exceeds the world tree, so it's realistically impossible. Those are their replies."

They can't find the way to make the jellyfish readily go huh, unfortunate.
I'll carefully read the written reports regarding the jellyfish. There might something that we have overlooked after all.

"About Satou-san's plan to use cages for the jellyfish, the clans that are interested with it are not only Beriunan clan and Burainan clan which are clans that like to do research, but also Zuwakanan clan, they're going to help during the experiment and the investigation."

It seems that although it was a plan that anyone could come up, there wasn't anyone that had tried it.
Unexpectedly, someone who thought of it might not said it out loud.

This is the first time I've heard Zuwakanan clan, but they seem to be a clan that live on the same continent as Biroanan clan. I see, this must not fail huh.

"Um, and the others are."

Lua-san reports other matters while turning the report paper.

About getting obstructed by other jellyfish when a jellyfish was separated for a certain distance away, it seems that the jellyfish around the area attacked with lightning together. At that moment, the jellyfish that was being pulled away would roll up its feelers and made an electric barrier to protect itself

from the lightning attack.

When the jellyfish released strong electric attack, they seemed to rob the required MP from the world tree branches, and several branches that were caught by the jellyfish seemed to wither because of it.

I'm concerned with the relapse prevention after the jellyfish have been exterminated, but Biroanan clan have already thought about it. It seems that they're having artificial life-forms made by the high-elves to go on patrols outside the world tree.

"Artificial life-form like Behemoth is it?"
"Ufufu, that's not it. Behemoth shouldn't be able to fly, Biroanan should be using <<Create Ifrit>>, and the summoned Ifrit should be using <<Create Papillon>> to summon flame butterflies."

Ah, not Behemoth, but wisp huh. Beside Lua-san, Aialize-san has reddened up to her ears, and she's slightly trembling due to embarrassment.

Since it's cute, I'll leave her as she is.

"However, isn't the duration short?"

If I'm not mistaken, the mana on the void sky is scarce they said.

"Yes, if they can replenish the initially needed MP that's large, it can be maintained for ten days, it's going on patrols to attract the jellyfish. Of course, when battle begin, it'll quickly dry the caster's MP, so they use the ship when it's the time to exterminate the jellyfish."

I see, it's more like a bait than a light trap huh.
It seems that the discovered jellyfish are to be exterminated by the ship that departs from the observatory. They seem to call it Light Ships.

"Every world tree has eight light ships each, but Boruenan only has four left. The goblin demon lord was rampaging a little over 100.000 years ago.

Heroes didn't exist yet at that time, so three light ships were destroyed before the demon lord could be defeated."

Huh? What about one other ship?

"That was given to the hero as a reward for exterminating the demon lord. I think it's still at the Saga empire even now since it's been passed on every generation."

There are four other ships that are the same type as Jules Verne huh.

"E, even if you look at me with those eyes, you can't."

Aialize-san has given a warning ahead of time.

"I, I'm resolute you know!"

Ah, it's about that huh.
I think Lua-san who's giggling knows what I have in mind, but let's not correct Aialize-san's misunderstanding here.

However, if this world tree has less ships than the other world trees, I think it'd be better if they think about the forces to hold the line of defense against the jellyfish, post-extermination.

9-28. Curry Festival

Satou's here. Do you like curry? I think that the genuine specialty-made curry and pouch curry are both delicious in their own ways. However it was painful when my clothes smelled of curry after the lunch break that resulted in the women employees looking coldly at me.

◇

Now then, let's begin the preparation for the curry festival tonight.
I asked Lua-san in the morning to reserve one of the squares.

Large pots are lined up on the ground.

The large pot is big enough to fit a man inside, and it has eight feet on the bottom. They're not for walking of course, but for creating about 10 centimeters gap when the pot is put on the ground.
During our stay at the duchy capital, I made a lot of these pots in the underground labyrinth, they were made to be heated with the [Flame Field] magic.

"You two, please help me peel the vegetables."
"Yes."
"Understood."
"Liza, teach Nana how to do chamfering."
"Yes, please leave it to me."

I entrust Liza and Nana to peel the vegetables. I take out the chicken meat that I've left pickling since before the duchy capital out of the Item Box and pass it to Lulu.

I'd like to use chicken cutlets as the topping, but I guess the chicken meat isn't quite enough is it?

"Mia, is there anyone I can ask some chicken meat from?"
"Nn, Hiya."

Her word is few, but Hiya-shi is most likely a hunter. After Mia beat her thin breasts doing "Leave it to me" gesture, she ran accompanied by Pochi and Tama on her flanks.

Are you guys going to catch Roc bird?

The shortage of personnel for the vegetable peeling is immediately supplemented.
The researcher of hero's dishes, Nea-san leads some adult woman elves who like to cook to help. I entrust several people that Nea-san's brought, and Lulu to do the work that would take some time to finish.

Nea-san and me are going to fry the onions.
Fry it carefully.

Slowly and carefully.

Slowly and carefully.

Nea-san is cooking while frequently looking here.
It's complete when the onions have turned yellowish-brown.

I have Lulu to change place with me and mass produce it together with Nea-san. It's written in the memo that this onions give slight sweet taste to the curry, so it's quite important. I make the onions that are big enough, and some carrots to be shaped like stars and crescent moons, I just need to arrange them afterward.

I feel lonesome stares looking here from the shade of a tree. It's Arisa and Aialize-san.

This is troubling.
Letting Arisa to cook is seriously a flag for failure. In case of Aialize-san, I

can't help but imagine her tripping the pot and gets splattered by the inside of the pot.

I beckon them, here here.
Arisa and Aialize-san points their finger toward themselves while having "Me?" faces.

When I nod to that, they smile like in full bloom, and rush here hurriedly.
When I think of this time, it hurts my heart.

"Ehehehe~"
"I-is there anything I can do?"

I say, "Yes", and pass baskets with candies from the duchy capital inside to them. I push thin stick candies to the mouth of the two who have received the baskets with blank faces.

Arisa seems to have noticed my intention as she crush the candy in her mouth while looking reluctant. Aialize-san doesn't seem to quite understand, she's eating the candy with slightly red face. Her expression is a bit erotic.

"Please distribute the candies to the pixies so they don't disturb us."

Ah, please don't put that "I've been betrayed!" face. With the basket hung on her arm, Arisa pulls the teary eyed Aialize-san to the square and gathers the pixies. I'm sorry Arisa. I'm leaving it to you to babysit the pixies and Aialize-san.

◇

The flame that's dancing wildly is heating the pots. When it has boiled, I relax the flame and remove the lye.
This work is really quite troublesome. I pass some ladles to Nana and Liza who were looking at it so interestedly. The two methodically scoop out the

lye. Only the serious Liza and the hobbyist Nana can do such troublesome work so steadily. I'll reward the two later.

Halfway through it, some elf men who look like they're in military seemed to be attracted by Liza's serious expression, they began to take part removing the lye. You guys, why does the atmosphere becomes as if you're doing a serious match.... Since it feels like I've lost if I retort them, I leave them alone.

Now then, once the lye have been removed, and the vegetables have been cooked, I just need put the curry powder next.

I'll leave the state of the vegetables' to Nea-san.
I'm going to prepare the garnishes at once.

I prepare many fried food as the topping together with Lulu. Whale karages and cutlets, fried prawns, wild boar cutlets, and fried white fish meat. Halfway through, I appoint Lulu as the teacher to guide the elf women the way to help.

Now then, I'll prepare the deep-fried paprikas, and pumpkins for Mia.
I only preliminary arrange these, the frying is for later.

I fry the sweet potatoes that I've thinly sliced before. I put it in a small basket, and bring it to the place where Arisa is playing Sugoroku with the pixies.

"Arisa, I've come to bring more snack."
"Uwah! It's potato chips! Is it alright? It's alright for me to eat it right?!"
"Share it with everyone."

Potato chips was among the item that I forbade during the diet back then, so I rarely ever cooked it. I've also told Lulu not to make it, so it might have already been one month I guess. I have some carbonated water that I got during the oak ores gathering, I'll try to make soda if I have some chance later.

"Okay! Popo, Lili, line up the pixies in a line! I'll distribute the wonderful snack from the hero's country you know."
"Aye aye sir, ain't it!"
"Oh you, Arisa, you're exaggerating."
"But, it smells nice~"

Potato chips seem to be popular with the pixies too. I can hear relatively angry voice of Arisa from behind. Work hard, Arisa.

I prepare sweet drink for people who are bad with bitter ones while hearing such voice from behind me. I'm just putting some Ugi sugar into cooled cow milk. The drink outward appearance become like green tea because I put this sugar which has green tea color. After the pseudo green tea latte fill three large bottles, I cool it with magic. I need to operate the magic delicately since it must not freeze over, but it's not that difficult.

◇

I put curry powder into the pot little by little, and stir it while the powder is melting, but it's not getting thick. Was the original recipe wrong? I put some wheat flour in order to easily thicken it. This time I feel that the body is lacking. It finally feels right after I've thrown some butter.

Next, I need to lower the flame, and wait for the flavor to sip into the vegetables. I'll fry the topping one by one in the meantime.

"Prey~"
"A big catch nanodesu!"
"Praise me."

Tama, Pochi, and Mia are running while being full of mud, so I stop them before they enter the square. Five elf men with nihilistic faces are following the three from behind. Although I said men, their outward appearances are that of junior high school students, so they look like nothing but some cheeky

boys. Arisa would have drooled over them.

"Thank you for your hard work."

I use life magic to clean the people who have come back from hunting. Pochi and Mia smelled strange since they were caught by some plant-type monster, so I use deodorant magic on them. It seemed to be quite hard.

There is no time to pickle the chicken meat I've obtained, so I'm going to use it for the topping instead. There are pheasants, and ducks, they look really delicious. I'd like to make the duck into kamonabe with dashi or udon, but I'll just put it on top of steamed salad this time.

The elf men who have come back from the hunt camp on a temp table at the square for the banquet, and begin to have liquor and appetizers ahead. Pochi and Tama are cunningly eating the grilled chicken at the place where the elf men are. Don't overeat okay?

"Nn."

Mia carries the potato chips basket near Arisa, and holds it out to me. Of course the inside is empty. Come to think of it, Mia and Arisa are often fighting over potato chips huh.

"It's dinner soon, so no. I promise that I'll make it as snacks tomorrow."
"Promise."

I join my little finger to Mia's little finger and do yubikiri. Aialize-san who's surrounded by the pixies seem to find yubikiri unusual as she's staring at it. Let's magnificently ignore it here.

◇

I distribute the completed curry rices. It feels like distribution center with all

these people and camps.

I use the slightly long thin rice from Gururian city. It feels like rice from the specialty shop that I had eaten at before, so I'm imitating it.

"Huh? It's not yellow."
"Yes, it's too much for beginner so I changed the color. Don't worry, I've made our share to be yellow."

There are four kinds of red yellowish greeen bitter orange curry this time.

First, green curry with spinach-like vegetables. I made this one for people who like vegetables like Mia. It has normal spiciness.

Next is the red curry with quite a bit of pepper. I made it for people like the nihilistic men and Lua-san who likes something curious. Nea-san and Lulu who tasted it end up in tears, so its spiciness seems to be uncommon. I put a lot of wolf meat I have in stock.

The yellow one is keema curry. Of course I've arranged it in Japanese-style. I put the pickled chicken meat in this. It's quite hot, although not at the red curry degree. Its yellow color is close to the primary color one, so people who associate it with curry probably won't associate it with something disgusting.

The last one is orange curry. It's actually a normal curry. This color is made by coloring agent. Needless to say, the harmless one. They're something that I originally made to distinguish potion, arranged a bit. I've put cow meat that I got from the elves-san for this one. I've made two kind of flavors, the normal spicy one and the sweet one.

Maybe because there's no prejudice against it, the orange beef curry is popular among the women. I make it so people can freely choose the fried topping that I've mass produced.

As for the small palates, there are fresh salads, boiled cabbages, mashed

potatoes, vegetables sticks, leeks, and etc. The soy-sauced pickles are limited so it's exclusive for my table. I'm currently making more myself, I'll share some when it's finished.

When everyone has spread through the place, the meal begins with [Itadakimasu] sign.

Ah, curry after a long time.

"Huh? The color of master's curry is strange nanodesu."
"The color is originally like this you know."
"The stars are hidden~?"

The stars-shaped carrots, and round-cut onions inside the curry seem to be popular. Now Pochi and Tama would probably eat it without avoiding it.

"It's hot, but delicious."
"Declaring that the curry here is cute."

Liza, you're free to put the topping and all. I think it's fine even if you pile the whale karage to the point that the curry can't be seen. She's chosen the keema curry. The chicken meat seem to be the decisive factor.
Nana is greatly delighted by the extremely hot red curry, and the rabbit-shaped cut of the apple-like fruit.

"Uu, it's delicious, but I can't eat it since it's too spicy."
"Aaze, do your best."

I've been admiring Aialize-san who's eating while drinking water with her mouth opening and closing with teary eyes, but I should help her soon.

"Aialize-sama, please try this."
"It's not spicy! I can eat this one."
"That's good to hear."

I changed her curry with the sweet one. The staff is going to enjoy her curry

later. There are also other people who seem to be bad with spicy curry, so I inform them about the sweet curry.

"If your mouth is still tingling, please use the drink here. It will subside the hotness a bit."
"T, thank you. ...Tasty. It's sweet and delicious."

Since she still looked painful, I presented Aialize-san with the pseudo green tea latte I had made earlier. The way she's drinking it gulp by gulp by using both her hands is cute.

It's not like I'm charmed by that image, but the [Guilty] calls somehow come from Arisa, and Mia. I forgot to distribute it to everyone. I had planned to give it to everyone in the first place, but it seemed to be bad of me to give it to Aialize-san first. Why.

I put the remaining bottle of the pseudo green tea latte on the elves table since it's bad for us to monopolize it.

"Ah, bliss. It's as delicious as Coconi curry."
"Arisa, hamburg curry nano desu!"
"Karauma~"
<TLN: Corruption of Kare=curry, Uma=yummy I guess?>

Nea-san seemed to have grilled the leftover meat into hamburg steak. That person really likes hamburg steak huh.

I look at the curry feast while nibbling the soy-sauced pickles.
I'm glad that it suits their tastes.

However, Mia. You don't know.
There are beefs in the curry you're eating. It's turned into fiber since I've simmered it in different pot, so she probably won't notice it. It shouldn't have the texture of meat either.

While having such strange narration in my head, I fondly look at Mia who's

doing all her might to put the curry into her mouth.

The curry, and the topping that have been prepared for 500 people are all consumed. There are many derivate dishes that have been born this time, like Liza's [Whale Cutlets among Curry].

There weren't any women who refuse the fruit jelly dessert even after they had eaten that much. No matter how they say that it's going to another stomach, it's bad for their healths, so I'll give them some digestive medicines later.

The curry festival is over like this.

The elves who couldn't participate seemed to voice their dissatisfactions, so it had been decided that we were going to have curry festival for a while. I didn't want to have curry everyday, so I gave the curry recipe to Nea-san who was fully motivated and pushed it to her.

I wanted to help Nea-san who had been dyed with the spices fragrances, but at that time, I was busy with another matter, so I couldn't spare some hand.

9-29. The Extermination Preparation

Satou's here. I've heard a saying that says, "Diluted poison becomes medicine", but that shouldn't be the case for everything. Conversely, the "Too much medicine become poison" is mostly true. If anything, it's "Too much is as bad as too little."

◇

"Hello, Satou-san."
"Ah, Lua-san, you've come just at the right time."

I pass the five big jars containing the [Sleeping Drug] for the jellyfish to Lua-san. Since she has the same [Magic Bag <<Holding Bag>>] like I do, there's no problem even if I give her heavy luggage.

For the past 10 days here, I've been giving 3-5 types of sleeping drugs for Lua-san to test on the experiments. As of now, the one that exhibits the highest effect is the one made from the world tree sap.

"I certainly got it. Even though I know that you've probably known the results of the experiments by the [Telephone] from Aze-sama, here is the written report from Jia."

I thank Lua-san and take the bundle of papers off her.
The poison with weak effect seems to only make the jellyfish sleep for 10 minutes, but conversely, the one that's too effective makes it like they've stopped living, let alone coma, it's difficult.

Since it could likely kill people, I borrow an uninhabited workshop outside of the town and compound the drug there. It seems to be the place where Rek-shi, a spriggan, has previously used.
There seems to be a small Source nearby this mansion, so there is no need for me to supply magic power to the magic tools here to operate them, it's quite

convenient in a lot of way.

It's really too convenient, I'd like to keep staying in it, but if I am too late, a [Telephone] from Arisa comes, so I can't exactly do that. Recently, Pochi and Tama participate on the telephone to make me feel guilty, it's become quite crowded. I questioned her since it shouldn't have been possible with normal Telephone, but she replied, "I worked hard to improved it" proudly.

Now then, I've passed the sleeping drugs for today, so let's do another work.

I'm currently doing four works including the making of sleeping drugs.

The first work is the making of sleeping drugs like earlier for the jellyfish matter.

Since we're lacking people who can use space magic to make cages for the jellyfish, we're going to employ ice cages, and sleeping drugs together, and is now currently testing whether it's viable to complement the lack of practitioners. We've found some sleeping drugs that are highly effective, and there are even some jellyfish that are still sleeping even now. If it's effective for 10 days, the jellyfish cages operation is going to be greenlighted at once it seems.

The second one, I'm trying to figure out how to prevent recurrence of the jellyfish.

I'm thinking about autonomous interception satellites for this. As an image, it's like a man-made base defense satellite. Since it seems to be possible to maintain Cube in the void sky due to the mana, I think this one should be usable at the high altitude. The biggest problem is maintaining the magic power. I've envisioned that it will have laser turret, and a head that operates it, making it looks like a floating golem.
The problematic thing is the power reactor after all. I'd like to use the philosopher's stone like the living dolls since I want build a system that doesn't require external operation from people as much as possible. Actually, I have borrowed three power reactors from Sotoriya-san, but since she's

emphasized "Don't break it okay", I can't experiment with it recklessly, it's hard.
Making nuclear reactor seems to be possible since we have magic, but since I don't have any document regarding it, I don't even know where to start. I'll leave this as a problem for the future.

The third one is working with the aerodynamic engine.

I combine my knowledge as a programmer, and the controller unit of the living doll that I've gotten from Sotoriya-san's living doll blueprint.
I try various things like balancing the output of the rotation I've heard at the duchy capital the other day. There are a crane, and a big fixation nearby this mansion, so this kind of work progresses very smoothly.
I've perfectly completed making the control unit, but the work involving the aerodynamic engine isn't going well since I have no way of knowing the speed. Looks like it'll be a while before I can complete it.

As you might have probably guessed from the [Aero] part of the aerodynamic engine name, this engine can't operate in place without atmosphere. I've hit a standstill before I can even start to work on building the replica of the light ship. I'd like to know how the light ship work, but since it's god-made, there doesn't seem to be any document that's detailing it. As for the maintenances, it seems that the docks where the light ships are residing do it automatically.
The aerodynamic engine that the hero is using (on his ship) seems to have been added later. I guess it can't be helped since they have to rely on Saga empire's technology, and magicians if anything break since they can't service it at the world tree.

The fourth is expanding our equipment.

Once we leave the elf forest, the next destination is the labyrinth city.
Leaving me aside, I want to perfect the girls' equipment. It'll be troubling if the equipment are too eye-catching, so I make two types, ones for showing off, and another that are plain for everyday use.

Presently, I've completed three staffs, and the prototype of non-lethal magic

sword.

Arisa's staff is luxuriously made from a branch of a thousand years old tree at Boruenan forest. I've focused on MP consumption reduction and increased magic accuracy as the main effects since we're going to have series of battles at the labyrinth. A great man once said, "It's meaningless if it doesn't hit" after all.
I've accidentally made an identical staff for Mia when I was making one for Arisa, but let's make it a present for having journeyed with us when we are leaving Boruenan. I acted as thought she was going to go with us. I think little children should be with their parents after all.

The third one is a staff made from the world tree's branch. The staff's material had somehow mixed in during the time when I was gathering the jellyfish feelers back then. Its performance itself is impeccable, but it looks like it's made of mineral, or rather emerald, so it inevitably looks conspicuous. The color and luster are quite beautiful that I involuntarily, and impulsively added a rose decoration on its tip, and carved tangled reliefs on the main part.

Rather than becoming a treasure, it has become a thing that will be stowed away instead.

It's not good to overdo it isn't it.
I'm reflecting on it.

Now then, about the prototype magic swords, I've modded the [Shell] that Pochi and the others use. In contrast with the [Shell] that is hard and blunt, this prototype is specializing in non-lethal attack, thus it's soft. When you invoke the [Soft Shell] on this sword, a cylindrical magic field that's about as hard as foam will be generated. The recent swords can generate [Shell], but even so, their attack still can reach if they hit too hard.
I'm expecting that this [Soft Shell] sword will have stun and knockback additional effects like black jack.

Right now, I'm thinking of applying this [Soft Shell] structure for making a non-lethal shotgun for Lulu.

I also want to start working on strengthening their defensive equipment, but it's not going too well. With the defensive equipment I've made during our duchy capital stay, it should be able to handle monsters that are on later half of level 20s, but I want to increase the margin a bit more. It might be good if I recycle the explosive-proof roof of the airship that are made of the whale leather to make new armors. I'll ask Lua-san to introduce me to an expert of armor-making next time.

◇

"Young master, miss Lulu has brought you a lunch."
"T, thank you Giril."

Giril, the house fairy (Brownie) who's taking care of this mansion, normally acts like a butler toward the guestss. He seemed to have lived in the labyrinth city long ago, so I listened to various stories about it from him during the rest times.

Apparently, he has a great-grandchild living in that labyrinth city, I'd like to meet it when I've arrived at the labyrinth city. I hear that it's a young brownie of around 60 years old. That's young huh.

He's walking as if gliding, bringing the lunchbox that Lulu's passed. Since he's only about half as tall as humans, it looks as if he's carrying an extra-large size lunch box. There are sandwiches and hamburgers that can be eaten with one hand inside. They seem to be made of white breads that Ms. Kua has shared. I'm honestly happy since I've been missing normal bread.

The danger of the [Sleeping Drug] is present even here, so it's off-limits to Lulu.

I open the cover and confirm the inside.
It's a sandwich with a lot of vegetables. It's been made with attention to detail

as it can be eaten with one bite.

I'm reviewing the problem earlier while putting the meal into my mouth.

"U~n, although it's possible if it's just scouting, without the philosopher's stone, it's impossible to have enough magic power to attack."

I involuntarily blurted to myself since I couldn't deal with the current situation.
I guess it's really impossible to have something like autonomous interception system~

If for example, the magic power from the philosopher's stone is 100A, then the golem needs 30A to maintain its altitude, and about 45A for the passive and active scouting.
From it, it's hard to regard whether maintaining altitude is low cost, or the scouting is too costly.

And, laser is the only one that can attack several hundreds kilometers away without getting dampened by the space. Laser needs little magic power compared to other attack magic, but nevertheless, it needs 1000A. The cost seems to be stupid high, but this much output is needed to defeat a jellyfish. It needs another 50A magic power if the laser is used as aiming sight.

I've become able to make battery-like things with the help of the elf technology, but for outputting 1A, I need to make it two liter big PET bottle size. Even if I make it at the degree where it can shoot one laser, it'll be many times bigger than I planned. The material for this battery seems made from the world tree sap, so it can be made no matter how many.

If I connect a cable to the battery, it's likely that the jellyfish would extend its feeler to absorb the magic power from it. It's wonderful that I don't have to make superfluous magic circuit to prevent counter-current since it already has a mechanism to do that from the beginning.

I completed one prototype of the autonomous interception golem [Scarecrow]

until the sun set that day.
I've only implemented the function to maintain its altitude on this prototype. I think everything is a steady accumulation of experiments.

◇

I wave my hand to Giril that's on the entrance of the mansion, and head back to the tree house.

Ahead of the main gate of this mansion, there is a Fairy Ring that connects to the underground town and the town above tree. Therefore, it's really easy to move around.

"'elcome~""Nano desu!"

It seemed that Pochi and the others had just finished their training, the two who were sprawling on the ground jumped up.

"Welcome back, master."
"Master, delighted that you've returned safely."

Nana and Liza who were tidying up the wooden swords and the mock spears, stopped their work and went to greet me. Nana is sweating a lot, though Liza isn't so much.

These fours are being taught by the elf martial artists.

Everyone is clearing the Attraction too fast that Shagnig the leprechaun can't keep up with the service and maintenance, so they're going to rest for 4-5 days every time they clear it. Thus, the beastkin girls who are free are training under the elf martial artist who are also free to kill time.

Pochi is being taught swordsmanship by Ms. Poltomea. She's the same type of Pochi who puts all her might in single blow. On the seat during the

banquet, she's said that it's fun to find the critical timing to do the single blow while enduring the opponent's attacks with her shield. It's fun to drink with this person since she brings various liquors from the elf hometown, and talks about her vast knowledges of those liquors. Her only flaw is her habit to start undressing when she's drunk.

Shishitouya-shi is instructing Tama the way of two swords. He's a user of Daisho Katana. He said that they're given to him by the king of Shiga kingdom several hundreds years ago. Both don't have inscriptions, but they're on the same level as the Torate I have.

Liza is taught by Gulgapoya-shi for the spiral spear, and Yuseku-shi for handling short spear. Yuseku-shi is not an elf, but a spriggan. Both of them are experts who are able to use magic edge.

Especially Yuseki-shi, even though I've never been taught directly, he's my teacher in my mind. Once, he was showing the next level of magic edge on the short spear as the final goal of Liza's training. It seems to be a skill called Magic Edge Cannon (Mana Blast). Since I wasn't able to see his magic power flow until he fired the Mana Blast, I still can't successfully do this technique even now.
I tried to ask him to teach me once, but he said tp me, "Steal it", with a terribly delightful face. I will learn it before I go out of the elf hometown to live up to his expectation.

And finally, Nana also has two teachers. The magic swordsman Ms Gimasarua, and the dwarf shield-user, Keriul-shi. Keriul-shi seems to be the uncle of Zajir-shi of the dwarf hometown, he's been living as a guest in the elf hometown since three years ago.

These teachers seem to eat dinner at the square that's been doing curry festival like before without getting tired of it. Even though it's been 10 days since that festival, looks like they're still continuing it even now. Nowadays, the curry is of normal color without any colorations.

I pray that Nea-san won't be dyed yellow.

9-30. Pests Extermination Operation

Satou's here. It's said that lights are usually followed by shadows. Even though it looks fine at a glance, out that some things have been overlooked. I think one should do a review during their free time.

◇

"Ah, Satou-san! It's about the Scarecrow Mk.7 that you've entrusted to us, it's broken through the jellyfish's detection, and succeeded until it gave the [Currently Watching] signal."

Lua-san reports so to me who have just come back from the duchy capital.
I was involved with a small disturbance in Puta town so I was slightly late returning back. It's not because I was playing at the store of a beautiful onee-san, nope.

I tested the Scarecrows up to the third revision myself, but Lua-san suggested that it would probably better to leave it to Jia-san who would be the one using it in the future, so the plan changed. Above all, the experiment had always relied most on Jia-san's magic, so there was no substantial change even if it was left to her.

The shape of the Scarecrow Mk.7 is like a beach ball that's stacked with swimming rings. The swim rings part is the magic power storage vessels (battery), and the beach ball is the main body. The main body is inserted with a philoshoper's stone as its core that acts as the power reactor, the surplus magic power from the stone is then deposited into the battery. The accumulated magic power is going to be used to transmit signal when it finds an enemy, and for changing its course.
The jellyfish detection seems to be enough by having the scarecrows and the alarms that have been put on top of the above town by Jia-san and the others to work in conjunction. The elves who are good at long-range attack magic are going to be the ones who will annihilate the enemies.

I receive the file that contains the detailed result, and head toward the tree house together.

"Master, welcome back nanodesu!"

Over there, Pochi is literally flying.

"'elcome~ look look~?"

Tama is also doing somersaults like she's dancing.
The two are wearing fairies clothes like the ones from fairy tales. With wings like the pixies', they fly around. Since I can feel magic power flowing on the wings, they're probably magic tools, or elf flight magic that are put on them. Pochi's wings are transparent like a dragonfly's, and Tama's wings are like the yellow butterfly's.

The two fly to beside me, take poses, and emit [Praise me] auras, so I dutifully praise them.

"You two are really cute. You look just like faeries."
"Ehehe~"
"I'm happy nodesu!"

Since Pochi emits [Praise me more] aura, I praise her more until I'm writhing. Of course, for Tama too.

The two who are satisfied fly before me, and hold out their hands, inviting me to fly together.

I guess I might as well treat myself to some sky stroll.

I rise with Sky Drive while taking the two hands. Since Lua-san has refused before I go up, the three of us are dancing in the sky.

"Who put you on these cute clothes?"

"Arisa~"
"Arisa made it nodesu."

Arisa is the one who made it huh, they're certainly different from the elves' native dress. I'll make some short staffs, one with a star decoration on its tip for Pochi, and one with a crescent moon decoration for Tama next time. But Tama likes cute things, maybe I should make her staff heart-shaped instead?

"Aze put her magic on us nodesu."
"Aze is great~"
"Eh~, have you properly thanked her?"
"Aye!"
"Yes, nanodesu!"

I'll make a pudding a la mode for Aialize-san as a thank for entertaining these two. She looked really envious when I made one for Mia back then, she must be going to be happy.

"Your very own cute fairy, Arisa-chan, appear!"
"Appear."

While saying some half-asleep things, Arisa and Mia fly out of the tree house.

Unlike Pochi and Tama, these two are wearing see-through celestial robes-like clothes that are erotic cute. Although it'll be a different story if it's Nana or Aialize-san, I don't feel the H with these two. Of course their important places are hidden since they're properly wearing underwear.

"How is it? Doesn't it feel like you're losing to your passion tonight?"
"It doesn't."

We've been taking bath together everyday, what are you saying now for just seeing you half-naked. Since it's bad for the children, I poke Arisa's forehead to keep her silent.

With Arisa and Mia joined in, we dance in the sky for a short while. The elves seem to be captivated by it, a lone tune plays, then another, and then, the fun music performance begins. Even though everyone is doing it impromptu, it's mixing really well together.

I lift aproned Lulu and Nana who were looking enviously from the balcony with [Magic Hand], and let them participate in the sky dance. I ask Liza who's hiding behind a pillar with my eyes whether she wants to participate, but she slightly puts her hands in front of her face while shaking her head, so I overlook it out of mercy. Come to think of it, Liza is bad with the sky isn't she.

I catch a glimpse of the exhausted Aialize-san leaning her body on a giant chick cushion in the living room of the tree house. It must be because she's lost to Mia and the others' [Request] to put flight magic on several people, even though she's been continuously using magic to capture the jellyfish everyday. Rather than pudding, I'll bring her some energy drink during my visit to her.

◇

"Aze-sama, it's terrible. Beriunan clan seems to have carried out the plan."
"Fugo!"

Hey now, high elf-sama, I think you shouldn't let out such sound since you're maiden. While Lua-san is wiping the bits of pudding that Aialize-san was eating until just now, Aialize-san asks the elf-san who's intruded again. What's this person's name again? Oh right, she's Roa-san, Jia-san's big sister if I'm not mistaken.

"And the result?!"
"It seems to be a success. There is no vacancy. There's only one injured person who touched the world tree because he was flustered and suffered a burn."

Good, it's a success.
However, according to the plan, this Boruenan village should have been the first to perform the extermination plan so we can follow-up if there's anything wrong with the plan. Did some arrangement change?

"thev becom the intial scrifce, so isnt good."

Arisa is talking some unknown words while chewing the garnish peach from the pudding a la mode. Good grief, so ill-mannered.

"Arisa, don't talk when you still have something in your mouth."

Liza gives her a warning faster than me, but--

"You have to properly savor the taste, don't talk. Otherwise, it's a sacrilege against the delicious meal."

--the point of the warning seems to differ a bit.

Per Liza's warning, Arisa talks after she's chewed her food.

"They've become the initial sacrifice, so isn't it good. With this, don't that mean the secret operation will be safely done?"

I have talked the matter about the jellyfish up to the things allowed by Aialize-san to Arisa and Nana. Of course, since I wasn't allowed to talk about the role of the world tree and the impact if the plan failed, I didn't talk to them about it.
Although, since Arisa has learned various theories about ether from the elf elder-san together with me, and read a lot of books that she's got from the elves as thanks for the food, I feel that she's found out about it on her own.

"There is no change to our plan."
"I understand. As planned let everyone beside the observer to take some rests for today, and tomorrow."

Right when Aialize-san's stopped her words that sounds like it's come from a different person, Roa-san runs toward the Fairy Ring with overflowing vigor just like when she entered the room. What an energetic person.

◇

500-strong elves have gathered in the observatory area. Everyone is a veteran whose level is more than 30. They had been continuously working to put the jellyfish to sleep and capture them in ice cages for ten days, alternating in three turns.

They will be divided into three groups; one group is taking the jellyfish outside the world tree with the four light ships, another group is dragging the jellyfish with spirit magic with Aialize-san as the chief, and the last group is riding a golem that looks like a tank with many legs to launch the jellyfish beyond the void sky using wind magic and nature magic.

I'm on the bench since if the elves can't exterminate the pests on their own, it will be troubling if they're suffering from jellyfish problem again in several hundreds years.

Of course, I'm standing by in the command room where Jia-san is, for if anything happens.

"Now, Boruenan children! The jellyfish cage operation has started! Let's do it carefully and happily!"

Aialize-san declares the start of the operation to the elves in the void sky by using [Mass Telephone]. It seems the instruction from the control tower is performed through communication magic tools. The elves working in the void sky are carrying communication devices that are as small as a mobile phone. It seems to be many times more advanced than even the com tool I've obtained from the hero Hayato.

With movements so slow it might irritate you, they begin moving the ice cages with the jellyfish inside to outside of the world tree little by little.
It seems that they didn't cut the jellyfish's feelers when they captured them in the ice cages, the feelers tangle with the world tree when the cages are lifted, breaking several branches.

I can see twinkling lights like they're from fragment of glasses, or rather, torn frost from where I am.

What a waste.
Having mentality of the poor, I couldn't overlook the world tree branches that were falling from the gravity. When I come to, I have already used sky drive and ground shrink to gather the ones that can be saved into my storage.

However, in the end, this slightly shameful behavior ends up saving many elves' life.

The quiet void sky becomes noisy slightly after this.

9-31. Pests Extermination Operation (2)

Satou's here. I once saw an old movie where the characters became small and went on an adventure inside human body during an old movie festival. I thought that it was absurd, but I could feel the diversity of people's imagination to come up with something that I couldn't think of.

◇

It's dangerous if I don't control the speed when I'm moving in the void sky using sky drive. Even though there's gravity, the air resistance is near zero, so it's possible to move at several times the speed of sound even without acceleration from magic. It's dangerous not to think about braking when I start to accelerate. I'd like to have the advanced magic, [<<Inertia Control>>], and [<<Inertia Cancel>>]

When my movement using Sky Drive exceeded the speed of sound, I obtained a skill, and two titles.

>[Flash Drive Skill Acquired]

>Title [Fast One] Acquired
>Title [Conqueror of the Heavens] Acquired

The Flash Drive skill I've acquired this time is a combination of Sky Drive and Ground Shrink as a set. I realized that after I had activated the skill. Since I can move like I'm flowing unlike when I use the two skills as a set, this might be more convenient. With Sky Drive and Ground Shrink, I can only move linearly no matter what. Against an opponent of the Wild Boar King class, there's danger of being read ahead, so I think this is good. Yes, it's not a waste of skill points.

While varnishing it on my own mind, I use the Flash Drive at once to collect the broken world tree branches that are falling.

The removal of the jellyfish seems to be going smoothly.
It'll be nice if there's nothing happen--oops--if Arisa was here, she'd say.

『That's a flag you know?』

At the same time as when that hallucination hits my ears, my crisis perception give me some slight warnings. There are two places it reacts to. I accelerate toward the nearest place.

『All hands, abandon your post!　Everyone, evacuate to the observatory deck.』

I can hear Aialize-san using [Mass Telephone] to send emergency signal to the elves who are executing the plan. If I'm not mistaken, it's the maximum priority evacuation order for when fatal failure occurs.

The elves abandon each cage that they're handling and move toward the observatory. The light ship comes to the slow tank, and picks only the crews.

The jellyfish that have been in [Sleeping] condition up until just now are starting to slowly but surely change to [Frenzy] condition.

There are two places that experience the change. Both are the places where my crisis perception reacted a while ago.

『I repeat, all hands, abandon your post!　Everyone, evacuate to the observatory deck.』

Aialize-san's thought trembles.
It's probably because of the place I'm going where the elves aren't evacuating.
Troubling thing. [Protect your life] order should be required shouldn't it.

『Kiya, Doa!　Leave the golem tank and hurry withdraw.』

Ah, those two huh. They're Sotorineya-san's teachers who cherish the golem tank that's on the brink of becoming a scrap like it's their own child. I've also consulted them various things during the making of the scarecrows.
I know that they cherish that junk tank, but to not follow the evacuation order like this.

『Sa, no, sir Pendragon!　You have to escape too. Don't overestimate your own strength!　Even dragons would be burned by the attack of the world tree!』

When I was shelving myself, a precise named order from Aialize-san came. She shouldn't have forced herself to use my house name. Calling me by my name would have been fine. Or rather, please call my name.

There are spherical lightnings on the several hundreds meters area around the round golem where Kiya and Doa are riding.

Wonder if this'll work.

"You big ginseng tree!　Is it branch, or is it root, make it clear!"

I slap my thought to the nearest branch by using [Telephone].
It would appear that this provocation is working.

Purple lightning extends out of the spherical lightning, and goes to me like a living thing.
Of course it's not because of the provocation. Since I've heard from Aialize-san that the world tree uses lightning to attack, I put use of the new magic, [Lightning Rod], and ward the lightning.

It's quite high-performance even though it's just an intermediate magic.
The giant dark gray pillar that the [Lightning Rod] has produced splendidly stop the extra-large lightning that looks as if it can make you return to the past 10 times.

I check the exterior of the stranded golem tank. It seems that three among six

of its leg on one side can't move. I quickly go down beside it with the Flash Drive, remove the broken parts of the world tree branches that obstruct it, and put the power tubes that got torn apart into the storage.

After finishing the repair that takes as long as making an instant ramen, the world tree prepares its second attack.

There are seven thunderbolts coming this time.
When I evade it as my magic couldn't, the largish branch behind me is carbonized, and breaks. That's bad, if I carelessly evade, the world tree will become the victim.

Protecting the world tree from the attack of the world tree feels somehow unproductive.

◇

I've understood the cause of the jellyfish's frenzies.

There are around 30 jellyfish larvae in the branch several hundreds meter ahead. They look like oval balloons. They're as big as human torso, and brightly emit pale green light.

The jellyfish inside the cages are flickering to match the waves of the lights that emit from the larvae. Come think of it, it's said that, "They plant the eggs into the world tree" isn't it.

I reuse the net that the thieves used to catch the knights back then, and capture the jellyfish larvae with it. I use the net since [Magic Hands] are busy picking the broken parts. I throw the larvae that have been captured on the net to the void sky.

The self-defense lightning generated by the world tree mercilessly turns the jellyfish larvae into cinders. Of course, the world tree was aiming for me who

was on a straight line from the larvae.

The jellyfish have changed from [Frenzy] to [Rage].
So that abnormal status also exist huh.

『The two have escaped, please come back fast!　If you don't, I'll go there!』

My ears hurt from the evacuation orders that Aialize-san has entreated since awhile ago.
I'm sorry for her, but let me do as I please here. The ice cages seem like they'll break if I leave the jellyfish alone now. It'll be fine if they get back to their normal conditions, but I have a hunch that they would start rampaging.

『I beg you, please come backk.』

I'm sorry, Aialize-san.

I invoke the [Kaleidoscope] and [Survey Laser] magic I've obtained from the duchy capital scroll workshop together.

The Kaleidoscope magic is named by Arisa. This magic generates several mirrors that changes the convergence rate of light and reflect it. I can arbitrary control these mirrors after they've been created just like remote arrows.

This Survey Laser is the result of my experiment to create laser pointers. Of course it has no power to kill even if I shoot it with all my might. It's an ECO design that doesn't deplete magic power even if it's radiated for a long time.

The Survey Lasers that are harmless according to my AR are reflected by the Kaleidoscope, and diffused while leaving trails in the void sky.

The ice cages seem to have come to their limits early. The sleeping drugs seem to be still effective as the movements of the jellyfish are dull, they extend their feelers toward me like crawling in the void sky.

『Mou, stupid Satou.... I'll tell Mia and Arisa.』

Aialize-san's crying voice sure is also cute.
While thinking how to follow-up her, my consciousness is concentrated toward the Survey Lasers.

Alright, I've affixed the last line.

I clear off the Survey Laser, and fire [Laser]. Of course, I'm not converging the 120 lasers like I was doing against the great monstrous fish. That's going to be overkill. Before that, the excessive power of the converged laser would probably break the kaleidoscope anyway.

The 120 lasers become 10.000 when they pass through Kaleidoscope.

Countless light penetrate the void sky, shooting through only the jellyfish and pass through the gaps between the world tree branches, disappearing.

The miscalculation is regarding the ice cages. The locations where the laser penetrate it evaporate, and strange accelerations are happening. I can't let the ice cages be destroyed by the lasers. If that happens, hot steam will violate the world tree branches.

I go around the void sky with Flash Drive, and collect the ice cages into my storage. Some largish branches were broken when the ice cages crashed, but please overlook this much damage.

In the first place, it would have been simple if the request was for me to do the extermination. Yet, the request was for [The way for the elves to exterminate them], so the scale became large. Based on this failure, we should add about the removal of the eggs in the extermination manual.

The telephone from Aialize-san had stopped before I knew it, so I decided to prioritize the clean-up.

While I continue to use the lightning rods to ward the world tree lightning attacks like usual, I capture the jellyfish larvae on the other place. I felt that the larvae can be used against the jellyfish, but since it seemed so heinous, I passed on it. I gave a silent prayer to the larvae that had been roasted by the lightning, and moved to do the next work.

◇

I have completely destroyed about 70 points where the jellyfish colonies have laid their eggs. Of course I used the map search to discover their locations. Even though there wasn't even one when I last visited the void sky 10 days ago, just when did they lay their eggs. I should have searched again before the operation began.

Since there were some eggs that had slipped into a branch, I used [Magic Hand] to pick them out after confirming its location with [Through Eye] magic. Please forgive me for breaking the barks during that time. I didn't think [Saps GET] at all, nope. The sap that I got during that time became an item called [Contaminated Sap].

The world tree is made to think that the jellyfish is a part of it probably due to the poison produced by the jellyfish eggs. Since there were eggs that were deep inside, I decided to break the branches and went inside to destroy it. When I slipped into the branches, the world tree ceased its lightning attacks. The lightning is probably exclusive for external enemies.

The inside of the world tree branches is filled with earthen pipes-like things for water. The mana thickens as I get closer to the trunk. I cut my way through it while avoiding battles as much as possible against the self-defense antibody that acts typical of white blood cells, and devoted myself to destroy the jellyfish eggs.

◇

"Satou's reaction has disappeared."
"That's terrible huh."

I greet so to Aialize-san who's sunk down on the floor, looking at the ceiling.

"Mou, what are you so carefree about! He's saved the world tree you know!? Why are you speaking like that!"

Her angry face is beautiful too.
I tell Aialize-san who's unusually full of anger, "I'm home."

Her blank expression is quite nice too.

Since I had gone quite deep into the trunk, it was troublesome to go back the normal way, so I came back with [Return] magic that I had just made at the duchy capital. Looks like that was the reason her tracking lost track of me. Since I felt like I was being watched, I think that it was a magic similar to [Clairvoyance].

"Welcome home."

Aialize-san mutters, overcame with surprise.

"Welcome home."

Why, are you saying it twice?

"Welcome home, Satou."

I hug back Aialize-san who's clung on my neck. Arisa would have said, "Guilty", if she saw this.

"I'm home, Aze."

I replied so while lovingly stroked the hair of the sobbing high elf-sama.

9-32. Victory Celebration Party

Satou's here. I had only ever seen the parade of triumphal return when an Olympic athlete from my town came back bringing a gold medal. The player I saw at that time looked slightly embarrassed yet very proud.

◇

"Umm, you two, isn't it about time."

Lua-san reservedly calls us. Aialize-san seems to notice that we're in public after she hears her. I've noticed that since awhile ago, but since it was such a wonderful scene, I enjoyed it until it was stopped.

"I-it's not, it's not like that!"

Aialize-san pulls away from me in panic, and begins to make an excuse to Lua-san and the surrounding elves. I mix in with the surrounding elves, and enjoy the panicking Aialize-san.

"It's not huh."
"It's, it's not, but, that's not it."

I reply her slightly lonely, and Aialize-san starts to explains in fluster. While I'm admiring her "au au"-ing with her eyes going round and round, I tell Jia-san and the others the reason for the jellyfish rampage and the way to cope with it.

"Then, those eggs are the cause that makes the world tree mis-recognize the jellyfish as its part aren't they."
"I have no proof, but the probability of that is high."

I inform them that the failure this time was caused by the larvae which hatched from the eggs and turned the jellyfish from [Sleeping] to [Frenzy]

condition, and when the larvae were massacred, the jellyfish became [Raged].
Furthermore, I pass the jellyfish egg that I've put in a bottle to Jia-san. I secured some since I thought that it would be needed for research.

It seems that the PR elder-san will replace the job of Aialize-san, who's fainted, to tell the other clans about this.

The elves who are here had agreed to tell the same story, that "The hero Nanashi beat the jellyfish." Actually, the silver masked Nanashi version was included in the plan, they easily acknowledged that heroes were eccentric. It's convenient, but now I'm curious just what did Daisaku-shi wear.

Unfortunately, the jellyfish remains don't have any magic core. My work of collecting the jellyfish remains along with the cages was in vain. It might be natural since they are not monsters but [Mysterious Creatures]. The EXP that I've got from the jellyfish are fewer than from monsters. I obtained less EXP from 10.000 jellyfish than what I got from seven whales.

◇

We, who have returned to the ground, join the party that the elves who are house-sitting are preparing. Since the place where the curry festival was held wouldn't be able to fit it, they had opened the meadow block in the underground town for it.

I've changed to ceremonial clothes, and participate in the triumphal return parade with the elves.

I'm outfitted with a holy armor that looks hero-like per the request of Lua-san.
Rather than hero-like, this holy armor seems to be an equipment left behind by Daisaku-shi. Even thought it was obviously too big, it changed to become a perfect fit when I wore it. I questioned for nearly one hour about the

mechanism for it, but since Lua-san who passed the equipments to me didn't know, I put it off for later.

A lot of pixies are sprinkling flower while looking cheerful from above us who are parading.

I go with Aialize-san and the other on a temporary stage that's been set on the center of the venue while basked in cheers. Aialize-san and her four attendants are wearing miko attires like when I meet them for the first time.

"Children of Boruenan! We have safely exterminated the pests which have polluted the world tree for long--"

Aialize-san reports the result with clear voice to the people who have gathered on the venue. Even though she seems weak with this kind of thing, I wonder if she's fine since they're like her family?

"--He is the hero of human, Nanashi! Please give him applause!"

My introduction was over while I was admiring her face from the side. Slightly late, I wave my hand toward the elves.

Before long, Aialize-san's speech is finished, and the stage is handed over to the bands to start the party. There are people dancing on the center of the venue, and people assaulting the food stalls on the circumferences, everyone is doing what they like each.

I use quickdress to change back to the usual Satou from hero Nanashi. I returned the hero's attires to Lua-san.

I pick a fruit water goblet from the beverages served by the living doll, and wet my mouth a little. While carrying the goblet on one hand, I passed through the crowd toward Pochi and the others.

I got in touch with Arisa using [Telephone] when I had returned to the ground. It seems they're putting some stalls, Lulu with a crepes stall, and Liza

with a grilled frog meat corner. The frog meat that Liza is exhibiting are from frogs the size of piglets. They're common amphibians, not monsters. The beastkin and Nana went on a hunt with miss Poltomea leading them yesterday.

Heavy drinkers are crowding Liza's stall, while Lulu's stall is crowded with the pixies and women who like sweets. The elves are happily chatting and playing music while waiting. They are patient, or rather, they're very tolerant against [Waiting].

"Master, here~"
"Master nanodesu!"

Pochi and Tama who have found me come out between the legs of the elves and come to pick me. The two are wearing frilly maid uniforms. I join hands with the two and go to the stall while navigating through the elves.

Looks like Mia has come to help, she's wearing mini skirt maid uniforms, matching with Arisa. Nana and the older group are wearing long skirt maid uniforms. I think it's better if it's reversed. Apparently, my taste and Arisa's differ for this one.

"Welcome back~ I won't do such inelegant thing like asking if you didn't overdo it, but you're not hurt anywhere right?"
"I'm back, I don't have any injury."

Arisa is worried about me while taking a pose to show off her cute clothes. It would have been good if she finished there, but since she muttered, "I'll be sure to inspect for any scars during the bathing tonight", it was spoiled.

Lulu and Nana are making the crepes. Arisa and Mia are taking orders and handing out the crepes in front of the stall. The gluttonous pixies seem to be trying to snatch some of the crepes, but Nana catches them and forcibly put them on her cleavage when they get close, so they're not getting it. How enviable. I want to snatch crepes too.

Lulu said, "It's special" to me, and made a small crepes on the edge of the iron plate for me. I feel bad for the elves who are waiting their turns, but since I'm slightly hungry, I thankfully accept it.

There's a tatami-wide wire net spread on Liza's stall for grilling the frog meat with the charcoal that miss Poltomea has supplied from somewhere. Good smell like from grilled chicken meat adrift. Liza uses a pair of long tongs to give the finished one to the customers while watching the heat level. How do I say this, her expression is too serious.

"Yo, Satou. Don't you have some dragon spring liquor from the other day?"
"I do, here you go."

Miss Poltomea's language is rough despite her cute western doll-like face. I stopped by the black dragon, Heiron's place, when I was going to the get the scrolls on the duchy capital, so I acquired some dragon spring liquor. I received it after I shared some of the Brownie Wine barrels I had a lot with the black dragon.

"Oh, nice smell. I'd like to get along with dragons just fer' this liquor."
"Poa, do it moderately okay."

Miss Poltomea's said some strange thing, maybe she wants to drink other liquor for a bit. Her elf friend who has started to pour the dragon spring liquor to an extra-large goblet holds her back. He's also a drinker, so half of his warning must be for her not to decrease his share of liquor.

"Savor the taste a bit more Poa. It's a blasphemy to wash down the meat with the liquor."
"I'm savoring it properly okay, Liza is fussy."

I distribute some human liquor and the dragon spring liquor to several tables that have the drinking bout started while listening to such magistrate-like exhibit from behind. This isn't because of miss Poltomea's words, but I'm slightly expecting the start with the black dragon with liquor as the impetus.

When I've returned from distributing the liquor, the frog meat have all been used up, so I take out 50 kilograms of whale meat. I cut some moderately big slice of meat, and put it on the meat place beside Liza.

"Liza~ another three servings of frog grills~?"
"Liza, another additional orders nanodesu!"

Tama and Pochi who have taken some orders announce it to Liza. When they're announcing the orders, their mouths are opening and closing, demanding for some grilled meat from Liza.

Liza seemed to be aware of it too, she had prepared two small slices of meat on small plates when she saw Pochi and Tama came back from the crowds. She catch the meat with the tongs and throw it into the mouths of the two.

"Freshly grilled~"
"Hot, hot, nanodesu!"

Liza smiles fondly seeing the two like that. At the same time, her hands quickly put some meat onto the plates like they're different creatures, and hand over the next portion of the orders to Pochi and Tama. There are more meat on the plates than the ordered, they must be for Pochi and Tama to secretly eat. Pochi and Tama who have received the plates ran happily to the customers.

I present the grilled meat that I've received earlier to the mouth of Liza who's busy for her to eat. Liza eats the grilled meat from the skewers like she's pecking while looking slightly embarrassed.

Lulu and the others who have ran out of fresh cream close their stall, and come to help Liza.

There's the figure of Aialize-san who has secured the last crepes behind the stall. The pixies are flying while protesting above her head, saying "Aze, one bite.", "Aze, monopolizing is unfair.", but she's not listening to those voices, and nibbles on her crepes bite by bite while covering it with both her hands.

She's like Mia who likes fresh cream. The figure of Aialize-san who's smeared in fresh cream appeared in an instant in my mind, but I erase that out. Calm down Satou.

I catch Arisa and Mia who have ran from behind Aialize-san. Lulu and Nana have gone to take lunch boxes that they have ordered from the wives network ahead of time.

"Kya."

I turn my head toward the short scream behind me, looks like Aialize-san's crepes has fallen to the ground. I think there is no need to have that despaired look on your face.

"Uu, it was the last one."
"A~a, I don't~ kno~w."
"It was the punishment for monopolizing~"
"Aze, regrettable."

She's on the verge of crying from the merciless words of the pixies. I was moved by her state, and inadvertently spoiled her.

"I will make some for you again tomorrow, so please don't be too down."
"Is it true? Will you promise me?"
"Yes."

I gently nod to the high elf-sama who looks up while tilting her head.
She presented her left hand's pinky to me, and I was going to present mine, but our fingers never joined.

Arisa and Mia take my hands from both side, and drag me to the table where Lulu and the other have spread the catering food.

Aialize-san looks at her little finger lonely while tilting her head. I won't break my promise to make you crepes even without that look on your face you know.

◇

Ten days later, Arisa and the others have finished clearing the last Attraction, and we're going to leave the elf hometown.

9-33. Parting with Boruenan Forest

Satou's here. The day when I survived on Calorie Bars from the work's pressure is a distant memories. Making a meal with good nutritional balance is difficult isn't it.

◇

"Satou, taste strange?"

Mia eats the hamburg steak with a puzzled look.

"It's delicious~you know?" "You're being rude to hamburg-sensei nanodesu!"

Tama and Pochi are covering for the hamburg steak. Their use of forks, and tongues to wipe the sauce might be the result of Lulu's and Liza's educations.

Mia's hamburg steak today is just plain tofu hamburg. Lulu and I are also eating one, but I don't think there's anything wrong with it, it's quite satisfactory.

"Does it not suit your taste? Try to eat the one on this plate."

I take out the hamburg steak on the plate I've made for second helpings left on the warming magic tool, and exchange it with Mia's. I've made the plate color different to easily identify them.

"Nn, delicious."

Mia slices one small bit and puts it on her mouth, then she nods satisfyingly and begins to nibble on it. The tofu hamburg that Mia's left behind is shared and eaten by Pochi and Tama. They push vegetable garnish beside the potatoes to Mia.

I guess I should announce it soon.
I wait for Mia to finish her hamburg steak before telling her the truth.

"Mia, I have something I need to tell you."
"Nn."

I talk to Mia with serious face, but for some reason, she's closed her eyes and pushed out her lips. I think she's been too poisoned by Arisa. I put the preface, "It's about the hamburg steak" to dispel her misunderstanding and continue the talk. She looks really dissatisfied for some reason.

"Mia, the hamburg steak that you just ate earlier had meat in it."

Rather, more than half of it was red meat with the fat taken out.
As I thought, she looks like Pochi when she ate the fish hamburg back then, as though she's been betrayed exaggeratedly.

"Guilty."
"Un, I'm sorry. Furthermore, the first hamburg steak that Mia ate didn't contain meat."
"Mwuu."

Mia looks like she's conflicted about something, let's do the last push.

"Mia, which hamburg steak you're going to pick for the second helping?"
"Mumwu, this."

Mia points at the hamburg steak with meat inside.
Looks like she still can't eat normal meat-only hamburg steak, but I'd like to think that her aversion has been decreased for a bit.

While looking like she relaly doesn't like it, she pushed back the hamburg steak full of meat soup that Pochi had presented.

I guess it's impossible to be so sudden huh.

◇

The Scarecrows are taking off into the void sky from the light ship that's hanging on the observatory.
The Scarecrows that have been rolled-out now are only half of the intended number. Since Beriunan and Burainan clans, whom we have sent the Scarecrow blueprint, have improved it, the later half of the Scarecrows are going to have improved enemy search ability. I entrust Sotorineya-san and her workshop to create the remaining Scarecrows.

During these 10 days, the jellyfish have been successfully eliminated from five wold trees.

Beriunan, the clan which had done the jellyfish extermination first, did so in order to be ahead of their rival, Burainan clan. Sure enough, the jellyfish eggs seemed to have remained in the world tree of Beriunan clan. They could prevent the second damage due to our information that were conveyed later, they expressed their gratitude for that.
It seems that there were also eggs that remained in the world tree of Biroanan clan which was destroyed by fire before.

As thanks for the achievement this time, the clans of Bareonan, Zantanan, and Dawosanan have decided to bestow one light ship to Boreanan clan. The elder asked me if I want one, but since it seemed too much for me, I declined after thoroughly hesitating. Let's come and borrow it if I ever need it.

"Hey, Satou. Are you leaving the forest after Arisa and the others finish the Spriggan's training ground today?"
"Yes, that's the plan."

In a rare occasion, Lua-san isn't here today.
Aialize-san, who's sitting on the chair beside me, asked while putting her face on her knee that she's grasped, I answered her clearly.

"Won't you go with me, Aze."

I invite her to the journey with slightly trembling voice. Even though there's 100% chance of defeat, I cannot pull back here. I see Aialize-san's face brightly gleaming for an instant, I'd like to think it's not my imagination.

"I'm sorry."

Aialize-san muttered so, and buried her face on her knees, so I couldn't see her expression.

◇

I perform the last check on the airship in order to deceive my broken heart. This ship looks exactly like the light ship. It seems that there was a movement to create their own light ship among the elves 300 hundreds years ago, the frame that was made at that time was given to me. There are a large quantity of frames stored in the storage block inside the world tree.

It's a small 30 meters class ship, but the loading capacity is abnormally big. Which isn't surprising as the quarter and the cargo areas are expanded with space magic. It seems that the philosopher's stone is used to maintain these expansions.
It's also been equipped with eight double inversion disks type aerodynamic engines. Four cylinders are loaded as propellers. They're simple devices that only compress air and blow it behind. All the installed machineries are optimized for low noise.

As expected, it doesn't have the function to hide in dimensions.

In order for it to not be conspicuous at night, it's been coated it with jet black coating, unlike the hero's Jules Verne. To increase its stealthiness, the radio wave absorption, no, the magic power absorption coating has been used. I'm slightly interested as to why they past elves need to develop this technology.

It has one power reactor for power, like the living doll. Of course it's not only for starting the aerodynamic engine. It can finally fly after I put 30 batteries that are made from crystallized world tree saps, charged with magic power to their most.

It goes without saying, the power that actually moves the ship is me. The power engine is reserved for illumination inside the ship, searching for enemies, and emergency landing if anything happens to me.

I was going to name the ship, False Light Ship Mk.I, but since the people on the surrounding objected it, the ship is still nameless.

There are two more vehicles.

A wooden sailing boat with a lower powered aerodynamic engine, and a small box-shaped carriage with a self-propulsion engine. Either one looks like a normal sailing boat, and a box-shaped carriage. The sailing boat has feet equipped for landing on land. It's also been made to not sink the ship when it fails on the water.

I've decided to leave the two old horses that I've bought in Seryuu city, and the hornless beast at Boruenan forest. The hornless beast is pregnant, congratulation. I'm surprised that the unicorns work fast.

◇

"Then, Mia, get along well with your parents okay."
"Nn, Satou."

Mia unwraps the hair that hides her forehead with both hear hands, and presses me to kiss there. Kissing the forehead as a farewell for her is alright, I guess.

I lightly kiss it like it's touching or not.
Everyone must be going to make me kiss them later.

"My, you've done it Mia. Quite the schemer."
"Mumu, agreed."

She triumphantly shows a victory sign toward her parents behind.

"Going together."

Yes?

"Going together."

After repeating it twice, Mia talks in long sentences that she rarely ever does.

"Satou of Shiga Kingdom, I am happy that you've accepted the engagement ceremony. Misanalia Borueanan vows that she will become one of your wing until death do us apart."

Did I perhaps, have been had?

"My, how wonderful. Satou-san, please make Mia happy okay."
"Protect her."

Looks like I've been had. According to Mia's mother, from the elves' perspective, kissing forehead means proposing for marriage, and if the receiver kisses the other's forehead, it means that the proposal is accepted. That explains why she's always said [Fiance].

I tried to tell Mia's parents that I didn't know such custom, but since they were Mia's accomplices, they plugged their ears, and went, no no.

Huh? Does that mean that I had proposed to Aialize-san during our first meeting? I might understand why she reacted until she became emotionally unstable.

Aialize-san who's come to see us off behind Mia's parent is pouting like it's not amusing. If you show me that face, I'll visit often until we reach the labyrinth city you know?

◇

The Dryad that Mia's father has called opens the Alf Road that connects to near the hidden village of the mermaids on the southern tip of Boruenan forest.

It's a bit hot there.
I can see the sailing boat that has been put in the inlet beforehand.

"Now, then, this is a farewell. I'll drop by again later."
"Come back anytime. Boruenan family will always welcome you everytime."

I take the opportunity to shake hand with Aialize-san during the confusion, but there's no 'guilty' reactions for just this occasion.

With the elders permission, I have left the carved plank as a landmark for [Return] magic in the tree house of Boruenan forest. I'm not sure if the distance is reachable, but if it's not, I can just use Flash Drive and acceleration magic to fly here.

"There's something strange nanodesu."
"Strange smell~?"

It's probably the first time they've smelled the seashore. Pochi and Tama are pinning their noses. Arisa teaches the two that it's the smell of salt. Looks like the temperature is high around there, let's swim in the sea once.

I carry everyone and the horses with [Magic Hand] to the sailing boat.

When I was going to carry Mia, I confirmed with her again if she wanted to remain with her parents, but she said [I'm going] and forced me to hug her. I carry Mia with Sky Drive to the deck of the sailing boat.
Everyone whom I have put to the deck with [Magic Hand] earlier are all booing, looks like the follow-up later will be difficult.

While waving our hands to the people who see us off, I open the folded sail with [Magic Hand]. I invoke [Air Control] to blow wind on the boat's sail, and the boat is departing.

The side trip is over.

We're going to advance along the west coast, disembark at the trade city, Tartumina, southwest of the royal capital, and head toward the labyrinth city.

Intermissions: The Misfortune of Puta Town [First Part]

<Author's Note: It's not Satou's POV this time, but the newbie magic hunter boy, Kon.>

"Kena! I've found the trace. This animal trail must be the one goblins use."
"Alright, good job Gadi. I'll treat you to a lot of ale when we come back."
"Tsk, you stingy. Get me better liquor will ya."

Gadi picks up a branch and stabs it on some fallen leaves, but I don't see where the trace is at all.

"Hey, Gadi. Where's the trace."
"You have knotholes for eyes? It's a goblin dung there see?"

Gadi poked me, but she also properly told me. I didn't need to have my head grabbed and pointed to the trace though...

Close, it's too close!

The dung will stick to my face!

It's hidden well behind the fallen leaves. How is she even able to find this hard to find location.
Crap, Kena doesn't look amused.

"Stop playing around, let's go quickly."
"Alright."
"Uy~"
"Okay, wait for me."

I hurriedly pick up the luggage that have been thrown on the ground, and shoulder them. There are strings for hanging luggage on my right artificial arm, so my left arm is free. Having one of my hand usable while walking on a slope like this is really useful. I'm not losing my balance and rolling down the slope like before.

◇

"Lower your head more."
"Ouch, tell me before you hit me."

Pomi who's hiding with me hits me on my head. Pomi is quick to use her hands.
We're currently preparing a surprise attack on the goblins that we've finally found. Looks like they're making a stronghold inside a cave in the mountain. The two goblins that are guarding the entrance are chewing some kind of raw meat.

Kena who's moving from the other side has given a signal.

Pomi and Gadi use short bows to attack the two goblins outside the cave. The arrow released by Pomi pierced the goblin's mouth, killing it in one blow. However, Gadi's arrow was slightly off the course, and hit its arm without defeating it. Pomi shoots another arrow in a hurry, but it's slightly too late.

"Gugyorau, guru, geroraa"

Damn, the surprise attack's failed.
Pomi's arrow hit the goblin slightly after it shouted. It's a single strike to the temple. Pomi's bow skill is amazing like always.

The goblin's shout has stopped, but the inside of the cave has become noisy. Kena and Bahana cut the bushes, and give the signal to attack in front of the cave, we also break out of the bushes to assault.
Goblins that are rushing out of the cave fall victim to Kena's and Bahana's short spears. Both of them kill the goblins in one blow. The other goblins are attacking the two, but they use the chance when the goblins are startled from their friends' deaths and kick them to open some distance.

I also deal wth the goblin's attack while hiding myself behind the shield attached on my artificial arm. My weapon isn't as long as the two's, so if I don't block it each time, it'll be a simultaneous killing.

I cut the goblin's thigh that I can see from the gap on the small shield with the keepsake sword which has broken tip. Usually, it only gives a small wound, then I finish the opponent after they've been weakened, but it's a bit different this time.

Slash.

While seemingly hearing such sound, my sword easily cut to the middle of the goblin's thigh. What? With this sharpness.

"Kon! Don't stop moving!"

The goblin that's fallen from Gadi's kick jumps from the ground toward me. Moreover, it's attacking from the side where I've just swung my sword. The correct answer should be to push the goblin in front of me and use the recoil to escape behind, but it's impossible.

This powerless me is barely able to retain my physical strength.

If I had power like Kena and the others, I could kick well, but if I raise my foot now, the shield will be pushed and the goblin will pin me down.

In the end, the goblin fangs pierced my side while I was thinking round and round. I screamed by reflex. I remembered the acute pain when I was bitten before.

The pain doesn't come no matter how long I wait. The goblin that has bitten my side opens its mouth big trying to chew my body.

"Kon, elbow it with your arm with the sword!"

I strike the goblin's head in accordance to Kena's advice before I can think.

The goblin that's surprisingly easy to shake off is then killed by Pomi who has rushed over with her short sword.

"Thanks, Pomi."
"It's fine already, just concentrate."
"Okay!"

I slash the goblin that's clawing my shield, and finish it off. I usually need to slash for more than 10 times before I can defeat one, but now I've defeated it in just three slashes.

"Alright, Gadi, watch for other goblins coming out of the cave. Bahana and me will hunt the goblins that are coming to the entrance of the cave. Pomi and Kon are to cut the smoking green wood--oops, Kon, you've been bitten by the goblin right, heal it first."

Huh? Come to think of it, it doesn't hurt.
The mantle I've got from noble-sama has been dirtied by the white drool of the goblin, but there's no hole on it. There also isn't even trace of goblin's fangs on the white armor which has protected my side.

"I'm gonna bandage you, take off your armor."
"About that, I'm not hurt, Pomi."
"Huuh? That can't be right? That goblin bit with all its might didn't it!"

Pomi rolls up the mantle violently. She consented after she checked that there was no blood flowing from my side. The line of sights from the other tree gather from that exchange.

"Hey, Kena. This kon boy really isn't hurt."
"I thought that it was just a normal wolf leather mantle, but there's something smoothly stitched between the leather. Seems that this protected him from the goblin's fangs."
"Hey, stop stretching the mantle."

It'll be expensive to ask someone to fix this.

◇

I'm gathering the branches that Pomi has cut with a hatchet into a bundle the size of my arm. There's a lot of fallen insects due to Pomi recklessly cutting the branches. I'd welcome it if they're the round caterpillars, but rhinoceros beetles have shell that's hard to remove, and not really delicious, I don't like it.

When we've finished gathering the green woods, we go back to where Kena and the others are.
Kena cuts the thin smoking stick that she's bough from the alchemist in just the right length, and stab it on the gathered green woods. Finally, she soaks it with a little bit of oil, and ignite it with a tinderbox.

Yellow smoke begins to appear together with the fire.

Ueeh, it stinks.
Additionally, my eyes are drizzling.

Pomi who has received the bundle from Kena, throws it into the cave.
Five goblins appear one after another from the cave, chased by the smoke.

I desperately swing my sword to the goblins that have come out.

"Kena, the smoke is coming out over there."
"Tsk, there's another exit huh. Gadi, go with Bahana to the other exit."
"Eeh~, my share will decrease."
"We're going to equally share this batch, so stop complaining and go."
"Aye yo~"

Gadi quickly rushed to the place where the smoke comes out, and Bahana went after her after a long delay.

◇

We hunted total 21 goblins from that cave. I only defeated three goblins. I don't have any injury unlike before, but my sword didn't quite reach the target, so it took time to beat them. I want to become skillful like Kena and the others fast.

Huh?

"What's wrong, Kon."
"Un, something is glittering on the mountain over there."
"Where?"

Gadi sharply noticed me who had stopped moving involuntarily from the light on the mountain. There's no more light from the place I point my finger at.

"It really glittered."
"Ah, you did well to find it. That's probably a reflection of the sunlight from a speartip."
"Is it other magic hunters? We had told the boss that we were going to attack on this mountain, and there shouldn't have been anyone that came here for 2-3 days."
"Maybe some people are chasing goblins from the opposite side of the mountain?"

It'll be bad if we scramble for monsters from other magic hunter group. If it's Gouts group, they will surround us and take the magic cores that we have gotten just now.

"The one beyond that mountain is the twin mountain. There is no magic hunter who will recklessly go the mountain where the Hydra appears. If there were people with such backbones, they would have gone to the labyrinth city to become explorers long ago.

If I'm not mistaken, hydra is a legendary monster that appears in old tale, or against heroes and the knights.

However, that means, who was there?

◇

"Who is it?"

Kena points her spear tip to a bushes.

"It's me, me. Don't shoot the arrow."

A big rabbitkin man with one eye, along with five beastmen from various races.

"What, it's just Orudo huh. Aren't you guys going to the mountain on the north?"
"Yeah, that was the objective, but...."

Kena presses Orudo who's hesitating to say it. Kena is arrogant like always.

"Katabane said that there was a strange group on the twin mountain, so he surveyed it, but apparently, that strange group is heading to Puta town. These guys have families there, so we decide to go back at once."

Hee, beastmen think of their families after all.

"Oy, you sure 'bout it?"
"Yeah, there's no mistake."
"Oy oy, stop them."

Katabane, who is a flightless birdkin with feathers only on one of his side,

points at the glittering place from earlier, and utters something to his companions.

"You guys, I'm talking with Kena here. Save the racket for later."
"Boss. It's not about that. Katabane said that there was a hydra among that group."
"Haa? Is that group running from a hydra or something?"
"Kena, that's not it. No one can get away from a hydra in the mountain."

Err, please talk more clearly.
I look around for someone that can teach me about it. My eyes meet Pomi's. Unfortunately, Pomi doesn't seem to know about it too.

"In other words, that huh. Some people who keep a hydra like some pet are heading toward Puta town."
"Seems to be it."
"Eeh! That's terrible."

I finally understand Orudo's talk. Even though I'm just surprised for a bit, Gadi hits my head. Fufuhn, it doesn't hurt thanks to the helmet from noble-sama. As if she's heard that words in my mind, Gadi pinch my mouth on both side from behind and pull it.

Iuaires.

Intermission: The Misfortune of Puta Town [Latter Part]

"What's happened, Kena. You've got yourselves quite a bit more members huh."
"These guys are just extras. Rather than that, I have something to report."

We've arrived at the town, and Kena tells the abnormal situation in the mountains to the gatekeeper.
I stealthily tried to enter the town during this chance, but another gatekeeper easily caught, and pinned me down on the ground. I can't slip out even though he's just putting his foot on my back.

This is the first time I'm entering the town in half a month, please be kinder.
I reluctantly pay the tax to enter to town with the pretty stripped stones that I've found on the mountain's streamlet. These stones can only be found in the mountain so it's worth some cash. Even so, a small bagful of it is only worth two copper coins, so Gadi and the others made fun of me.

"If you're going to pay in kind anyway, go get some animals instead."
"I've said it before right. I can't catch animals without a bow and traps."
"Can't you just sling some stones like Katabane?"
"That's harder than it looks you know. I tried to practice it before, but I couldn't hit the target no matter what."
"Fuh~n, it looks so easy though."
"It really is."

While sweeping the dust off my breastplate, I'm talking some nonsense with the young gatekeeper.

"Gadi, I'm gonna go to the governor's place, so I'll leave communicating with the boss to you."
"Alright."

Kena and Orudo are going together with the old gatekeeper to the governor's mansion. The young gatekeeper is shutting the main gate as instructed by the old gatekeeper. I'm also helping him for some reason.

"Let me get in free next time."
"You fool, this is a duty. Duty. You don't want the town to be overran by monsters right?"
"Of course I don't."

I feel like I've been coaxed somehow.
The other magic hunters haven't been here for a long time. They must be enjoying the Buri town for half a month.

◇

"Yo, what are you doing shutting the gate in broad daylight like this."

When I was sinking down on the ground while leaning my back on the gate after I closed it, I could hear the voice of a carefree old man.

I look up and see a middle-aged old man saying something to the young gatekeeper.

Beside him, there's a handsome man who's wearing glasses and knight-like clothes with a long pole that looks like it's for laundry, and another one is a past-20s years old aunty who's wearing a robe with a staff.

The middle-aged old man is carrying a great sword on his back.
Maybe they're explorers?

"Actually, a hydra has appeared in the mountains--"
"Ho, a hydra you said?! That sure is delicious."
"Wait, you, hadn't you got stomach pain for one week back then. You haven't learned anything have you."
"Kyura is here this time, it's fine it's fine."
"I don't wanna. The fool who's still going to eat it despite knowing that it's poisonous should just suffer."

What are these people saying?
Are they going to eat Hydra? Eh? They said it's poisonous?

"That boy over there. This guy tends to badly forget his level. A hydra is an opponent for a group of armed forces, don't think that you can fight it even by mistake."

I nod to the handsome man.

"Excuse me. Fumu, this is quite wonderful."
"Hmm? Let see. Isn't this just normal wolves materials--oy, this shell is."
"Yeah, I think it's either from a Soldier Beetle, or an Assault Beetle, but I've never seen one that's so splendidly made like this. Moreover, it uses a whole beetle for the breastplate part, very luxurious."
"Hey, Yasaku, and also Tan, leave it at that. The boy is confused."

I'm happy that they're praising my breastplate, but please don't draw closer.

"Was it made in this town?"
"Yup, that's right."
"Then, can you introduce us to that armor craftsman?"
"I'm sorry, that's impossible."
"Is it an eccentric craftsman? I'll give you some reward if you introduce us."

By reward does he mean money? U~n. I want to introduce them, but it's impossible.

"I'm sorry, that person is not in this town anymore."
"I see, that's unfortunate. There's barely any merchant who deals with monster materials in the duchy capital. We're looking for someone that can repair our armors which have been damaged during the martial art tournament."

Eh~, is that rare. Armors made from monster materials are light and durable, so I thought that it was common in the duchy capital. The noble who gave me

this armor also said that it was cheap.

◇

Several days later, the hydra appeared. There are two of them.
Around the hydras, there are around 100 beastmen who are wearing strange cloth masks that are drawn with strange patterns. That crowd was divided, and some men wearing white and riding lizard horses (Raptors) appeared. These two seem to be humans.

"...■■■ Monster Check."

Oh, it's magic. The handsome man seems to use magic to investigate the hydras that have shown up their bodies in the forest.

"Their levels are 29 and 28. They're slightly stronger than the ones in the labyrinth. I tried to check on those white masked people too, but I couldn't see it. Those masks seem to be magic tools that inhibit appraisal."
"Which one do you think is the monster tamer?"
"It's probably the short person who's hiding on the back of those hydras."

I've slipped among the explorers, crowding in the watchtower on top of the gate. I'm acting as the liaison--as the reserve, between this people and the guard."

『Foolish people, we're going to release you from the tyranny of Shiga Kingdom!　We are the Wings of Liberty. The one that will lead you to the true liberty!』

I can hear the loud voice of the masked person. I don't know what's he talking about since he's using some difficult words. Maybe he's saying they're surrendering?

"Yasaku-dono, the governor has permitted us to attack. The archers unit will

begin the attack with yours as the signal."
"Ou, leave it to me."

Yasaku is chanting something and then, a black hole appears in front of my eyes. What's this?
Ooh, he took out a bow with some sinister engravings and stacks of arrows from it.

"What's wrong boy. Is this your first time seeing Item Box? Then, touch it once. People who are carrying explorer's gene and have touched the item box are going to obtain their own (item box) someday."

I timidly push my hand into the Item Box, and pull it back. There's no sensation, but I fear that the black hole will eat my hand.

"Yasaku, if you don't shoot soon, I'll do the first hit okay?"
"Baro, leave that to the explorer party leader. <<Disturb>> Blue Magic Bow."

The bow and arrow are glowing red as if answering Yasaku. It's called blue magic even though it's red?
The red arrow kills the monster tamer near the hydra.

"Fufuhn, that's what happen when your magic defense got cut."
"Really, that bow is really suited to be magician killer."

Following it, the archers of Puta town defense force release their arrows all at once. The opponents seem to defend against the arrows by hiding behind trees. The arrows also hit the hydra, but it looks like its skin repelled it. Ah, it's mad. It's coming here.

"Hey, isn't it better if the hydra runs amok in the enemy forces?"
"What a coincidence, I'm also of the same opinion."
"Hey you two, please don't talk so carefree, do something about it. It's coming over here."

I involuntarily complained to the two who are being carefree. I thought that I

was going to be hit since it was cheeky, but the two laughed it off.

When the hydra is on the halfway point between the city gate and the forest, it suddenly opens its mouth and spits a fireball. I reflexively hide behind the rampart. I can feel the hot air above me, it burns a house upon impact.

Uwah, that house has just been completed last month.

The sociable handsome friend of Yasaku, and the robe aunty have finished their chanting.

"...■■■■ Javelin."
"...■■■ <<Lightning Storm>>"

Many light spears and loud lightning storm that hurt my ears violate the hydras. The hydras are screaming like they're going mad, how pitiful.

『Curse you, Duke!　Have you heard our plan and sent some skilled people for it!』

The white masked person on the enemy's side is shouting something.
Half of the enemies charge ahead with the signal from the white masked people. Looks like they're monkeykin judging from the way they run.

"Hey, are we the duke's subordinates?"
"That's a nice misunderstanding."
"We're here by chance after all. Isn't it cute, by chance?"

I wonder why are they this carefree?　Are all explorers like these?
The lightning magic seems to make the hydra skin becomes brittle as the defense force's arrows can pierce it normally now. It's going to be defeated soon.

The masked monkeykins are being shot to death one after another before they can reach the wall.
When I look closer, it seems several of them are hiding behind their

companions.

『Demon lord-sama! We will offer you once again here! Our liberty with your majesty!』

"What? They're demon lord worshipers huh?"
"Looks like it. How troubling."
"I hate those kind of fanatics. Can I burn them all?"
"Wait, Sheriona. We won't know their background if we don't catch that leader."
"How annoying."

"Hey, this is bad."

The body of the beastman who have arrived on the wall are swelling and warping. I pull Yasaku's sleeves beside me to tell him.

"Geh, the heck is that?"

The people around Yasaku have begun chanting. Yasaku also puts away the bow, and take out a big shield.

The monkeykin that had became three times bigger reached the top of the wall by just jumping lightly. It's not a monkeykin isn't it? I mean, it has a mouth with a lot of fangs on its stomach.

Ah, my body has frozen, I can't move. The fang comes close to my face. Breath that smells like from a beast drifts to me.

"Yasaku the explorer, coming!"

From the side, Yasaku thrusts himself with his shield, and drops the mouth stomach monkey (monster) to the ground below together with him. However, both are sturdy. Even though they had fallen from this height, they took some distance away like nothing happened.

"...■■■ Physical Reinforcement Over (Hard Boost)"
"...■■■■■ Lightning Bolt"

Lightning bolt hits the mouth stomach monkey along with blinding light and deafening sound. Handsome-san nimbly moves to the blind spot of the mouth stomach monkey and cuts it. Both are too fast, my eyes can't follow it.

"...■■■■ Divine Wall"

Light wall appears around Yasaku and the others.

"It's fine now. It's alright even if it's hit with a big magic."

The aunty magician who has already chanting since a while ago, lightly nods.

"...■■■ Thunder Storm"
"Uwaa, Barou, are you going to turn us to cinders too."
"Yasaku, you're too slow to get away."

Lightning storm that's far more amazing than the one used against the hydra awhile ago blows violently. Yasaku and Tan are saying something below, but I can't hear it.

"I'm taking this chance, Whirlwind Blade."

The great sword glows red and carve many wounds on the mouth stomach monkey.

"You're too soft. Sharp Edge."

From the opposite side of Yasaku, Tan continuously stabs with a light long sword.
It seems that they're going to defeat it soon. Explorers are amazing after all. They're unparalleled compared to me or Kena, or even Orudo--there are people this strong huh.

My out-of-place excitement is erased by several screams that are raised from the sides of the rampart.

There, several mouth stomach monkeys are routing the guards and the magic hunters.

『Be awed! Our trump card!　Taste the overwhelming violence that even we cannot control!　This is exactly demons!　Ah, your majesty demon lord! The world of demons will begin once again on this land.』

"Demon?! This is bad."
"Really bad isn't it. Yasaku, Tan, let's escape quickly."
"Right, monsters are one thing, but demons are bad."
"Why? Aren't you just about to defeat them."

Yasaku and his friends are going to escape as soon as they heard about the demons. Even though they're the only people that can fight it head-on.

"Demons, you see, are clever. A weak magician and priest can only do this much."

The aunty magician takes out another staff that's different from what's she's been using until now, and sticks it out toward the mouth stomach monkey. Firebolt comes out of it, exploding the mouth stomach monkey. The mouth stomach monkey that have fallen to the ground doesn't seem to be damaged at all.

"We can handle one of them, but only hero can do something with this many."
"Look out."

Gueh.
A mouth stomach monkey that has jumped over the wall and descended, tramples me. The pain from the gatekeeper trampling me can't be compared to this weight. I muster my consciousness that's almost gone, and stabs between the fangs of the stomach mouth monkey with an arrow I've grasped.

The mouth stomach monkey looks like it doesn't feel anything even thought I've stabbed it many time.

The magicians and the aunty seem like they're trying to save me, but it seems they can't use magic because I'm in the way.

I wonder what is that.
I saw the shadow of a floating person when I was forced to face up. Purple hair?

『<<DANCE>> Claiomh Solais』

Several swords are sprinkling down from that figure. It's beautiful.
That sword arbitrarily moves like a creature and slashes the mouth stomach monkey (demon) that has trampled me. The mouth stomach monkey is cut right in half with just one slash.

When I crawled out of the mouth stomach monkey, the battles inside and outside the rampart were over.

"It's the swords of heaven."
"It's the Ancestor King Yamato-sama."
"Yamato-sama, hooray!"
"Glory to the Ancestor King Yamato-sama!"

Everyone unanimously calls Yamato-sama name.
I don't know whether the person flying in the sky is really Yamato-sama. However, I was able to shout "Thank you" with all my might, before that person flew away.

I thought that Gadi and Bahana had died, but it seems they've gotten off with just bone fractures. Kena and Pomi seem to get off with just scratches.

I've only gotten bruised. Yasaki and the others call it a miracle. Maybe it's thank to the armor I've gotten from noble-sama. I'll thank him once again the next time we meet.

SS: Muno City Anecdote

"Ni, Nina-sama, there are a group of carriages carrying a letter from chevalier Pendragon-sama on the castle gate, what should we do."
"『A group』 of carriages? Where is that letter?"
"Here it is."

The sealing wax on the letter is certainly that of Satou-dono.
I tell Yuyurina to make the carriages wait on the courtyard, and tear off the sealing wax.

What? Inventory list huh?

Large quantity of foods, which makes me doubt my eyes, are written there.
I move my feet to the terrace and look down, I understand that this list, at least quantity-wise, isn't a lie, looking at the parked carriages.

"Good grief, thanks to this the people won't starve, but just how much do those cost. It'll be troublesome to calculate the total sum of our debt."

I pass the list to Misona, the civil official who has come in place of Yuyurina, for her to check if it matches the commodities on the carriages. This girl is inflexible as she's very suited only with this kind of work.

◇

I couldn't believe the story about that man I had heard from the merchants.

He exterminated the demon that had attacked Gugurian city? It's not like I don't believe it since it was a lower demon, but I have never heard anyone defeating it without any victim. Karina-sama seems to have also fought with him, that girl is really. We know that he's quite excellent, so just get him quickly won't she.

More than that, the personal connections that he's built in the duchy capital is quite frightening. It seems he's bought the smoked food this time for cheap from earl Houen, but just how did he obtain the favor of that hard to please earl.
Even for Orion-sama, if he keeps being unsteady, Satou-dono will likely reverse their master and servant relationship. Thankfully, Satou-dono doesn't have ambition to rise in dominion.

With these many food, I guess we can distribute them to the villages for a bit. Let's give meal for the slave labors who are working on the town and cultivating new land for their payments instead, I guess I'll have Misona and Yuyurina work hard to hammer out the details.

◇

However, it seems that I've misread that man.

After that day, three more carriage groups of the same scales arrived.
That was already quite enough in itself, but I was shocked with the content of the letter that Karina-sama had brought from Satou-dono.

It was written that several workshops had accepted to send exchange students to Muno city. Even though it usually needs extraordinary hardships to make them agree to it since they don't want to spread their technologies.
Good grief, even though he's declined the [Special Liaison Chief] position, he's actually doing it--no, he's done something far bigger than I've expected.

While savoring the pastry called [Muno Roll] that Gelt the head-chef has brought, I'm racking my brain as to how are we going to reward these achievements.

We have neither money nor treasures. We've already given him peerage. It should be appropriate to make him into a chevalier from a honorary chevalier, but that man didn't have interest to it. Raising his peerage more

than this would need a recommendation from his majesty the king. And, there's also women huh.

Even baron-sama has a second wife after all.
That man probably won't refuse if he can marry a young girl.

Shall I make that village girl called Totona to be an adopted daughter of Baron-sama.
It's painful that there's a possibility for that jest to happen.

"Good grief, I should think hard in the more proper direction about this."

I can't help but grumble like that while hearing yells that come from sir Zotor and Karina-sama's fight outside.

If only I was 20 years younger.
I take a deep breath while thinking such foolish thing.

It's insufferable to have my worries increase as the management of the territory improves you know.

Intermission: At Baron Muno Territory

◇Baron Castle - The Baron's Private Room◇

"Baron-sama, sir Zotor, and Hauto-dono have come."
"Okay, let them in."
"Excuse me."

The two people who have been invited into the baron room are bewildered. That's because, even though he's a sociable master, he seems to have no interest in military, and gives directives to them via consul Nina.

In addition to that, there are two swords on the work desk of the Baron. Zotor can feel unknown power from those swords that are covered in simple sheaths.

"Sir Zotor, will you pull that sword."
"Yes."

Zotor replies with short acceptance word, and pulls the sword. Hauto that's been summoned together with him waits behind him without saying a word. Even though the baron is the father of his lover, their public standings are like heaven and earth, so it's an extremely natural thing to do. Nevertheless, he can't hide the gleaming interest on his eyes.

"T, this is, is this a magic sword?"

Zotor commented like so on the sword he held on his hand. That is because it feels similar to the magic sword that his acquaintance's noble superior flaunts once. That superior's sword was made of mithril. Just like with this sword, they're not made of iron alloy.

He erases his hesitation, and seeps his magic power into it. It's something that's meaningless with the iron sword he normally uses, but it's an essential act with the old sword made from monster's parts that he once had.

"Amazing...."

From his standpoint, the magic power is flowing unbelievably smooth in the magic sword.
While it's like that, he does practice swings several time with the sword, and then puts it back on the desk. He pulls the second sword the same way. They seem to be the same model as they're made uniformly. This is also something that's impossible for his common sense. Normal magic swords are something that have loose performances among each of them.

"They're wonderful swords. This is probably worth more than 100 gold coins--are you going to sell them to the official merchant?"

He asks while feeling a bit reluctant. With the current economic condition of the baron territory, these kind of swords cannot be given to his forces. Zotor is thinking that the baron probably has summoned him to inquire the price of these swords.

"Do you like it?"
"Yes, the opportunity to wield swords as good as these are very rare, whence, I am extremely grateful for being given the chance."
"Is that so. It's splendid if you like it. Accept them, those swords are yours."

That unexpected words causes bewilderment to surface rather than delight. However, just when the baron stops speaking, that bewilderment is eliminated, and delight resurfaces.

"D, don't tell me, such excellent swords are going to be lent to us?"
"No."

He's headed back to discouragement with the quick reply of the baron.

"Those swords are given to you. Divert your gratitudes to chevalier Pendragon. He's asked us to give these swords to you two."

Chevalier Pendragon--he's one of the only three nobles in this baron territory. There is no shortage of anecdote surrounding him. If the baron says that they're gifts from him, then it's probably really true. Zotor receives the sword with both his hand. He dedicates his gratitude to the baron, and his retainer.

◇Baron Castle - Courtyard◇

"Beautiful..."
"Hohou, is newbie-chan going for Hauto-san?"
"Kya, Erina-san! Since when have you arrived."
"Just a little while a~go. And, are you aiming for Hauto-san? Doing some social upheaval?"

There are the figures of the captain and the vice-captain of the territory army swinging the magic swords they've just received ahead of the girls. There is no light on the magic sword that the vice-captain is swinging, unlike with the captain's. There's the baron daughter, Soruna with her maid attendants on the shade of a tree further ahead.

"What I'm looking is the sword that Zotor-sama is swinging. I've never seen such beautiful sword before."

Erina's eyes keeps pushing on like she's saying that she's only having an excuse.

"Like I said, it's not like that. It's impossible to have an illicit relationship with someone who's being looked with such loving gaze like that. Moreover, I have someone else I love."
"Ah~, come to think of it, you've said it before. Was it the young merchant who generously gave you an expensive magic potion when you were dying from running into a carriage?"
"Ehehe~, I don't know his name, nor his face though."

The face of someone whom Erina knows well floats in her mind, but the girl

prudently keeps that to herself since she doesn't want to add anymore rival than now.

◇The Pioneer Village◇

"Eh? Apprentice is it?"
"Yes, won't you become an apprentice maid at the baron castle?"

There are two maids, and a girl in a room of one of the only two house that the Pendragon village has.

This is a pioneer village that doesn't even have monster-warding barrier pillars. It'll be no wonder if someday monsters attack, erasing this village from the map. The people that reside here are elderly that have been abandoned by their hometown, and ran-away children who are formerly serfs.

Just how does this much reclaimed field exist inside the forest, no one, including the people that live here, knows. It seems the village name is taken from the person who has helped them.

"But, I've never done anything beside farmworks."
"You don't have to worry 'bout that y'know? It's something that even me who's a former soldier can do."
"Meda, you stop talking."

Meda draws her head back from Pina's roar. Pina puts some power on her voice since she can't let her first job as the team leader ruined by her subordinate's foolish words.

"If Totona-ane doesn't want to, then I will do it! I want to be useful to Satou-sama and Arisa-chan!"
"Wait Rorona, where did that come from."
"Satou-sama gave us warm meals. He also left food so we didn't starve. Even the fields here must be something that Satou-sama had prepared."

The little girl emphasizes it with all the might on her small body. She's clearly too young to become a maid. However, Pina seems to have judged that there's no problem with it.

"Fine then. Let's heed your spirit. Rorona, we will employ you as an apprentice maid. Totona, what are you going to do?"
"Uu, please take care of me."

Totona who can't let her little sister go alone to an unfamiliar place reports that she's agreed to become an apprentice maid.

◇Muno City - In front of the Gate◇

"What is this?"
"That's, when we open the gate in the morning, it's become like this."

There are more than 100 men who look like thieves tied on several stone pillars before the eyes of Zotor who has come to the gate as he's called for. There is a writing on the stone pillar that politely says they've been captured since they're thieves.

"Hmm? Aren't you Gouhan?"
"Eh? Zotor-sama? Didn't you escape?"
"That one is Orto huh?"
"Zotor sire!"

There are some familiar faces among the thieves. They're former knights and soldiers of the territory army who had left the army due to the clash with the consul at the time. There are also former craftsmen and priests. Zotor has decided to ask the opinion of consul Nina in expectation of securing human resources for the lacking baron territory. After confirming their Reward and Punishment with the Yamato stone, the shortage of human resources in the baron territory has improved for a tiny bit.

◇Baron Castle - The Consul Office◇

"Nina-sama, it's terrible."
"What is it, Yuyurina?"
"That's, um, it's about Chevalier-sama again..."
"Him again! What has he done now!"

Yuyurina who's bearing the crest of the government service--despite her childish body, she's the second brain after Nina in the castle--rushes into consul Nina's office while her braid is swinging.

"We've received written letters asking for us to intermediate marriage proposals from nobles in the duchy capital."

The truth is the letters have originally come for the baron, but since he's troubled as to how to handle them, he pushes it to consul Nina by way of Yuyurina. The reason why the baron didn't directly give it to consul Nina can be easily guessed.

"He went together with Karina-sama right, when did he gain that kind of philanderer reputation."

Consul Nina's expression looks disgusted, but that's understandable. For her, for the sake of the baron territory's stability, it's her wish for lady Karina, the baron daughter, and him to be tied together. That plan doesn't seem to have any hope for success since, even though lady Karina doesn't seem to be wholly to it, she's putting her effort on the wrong way, on top of the aforementioned man having only interest in little girls. Although, the story that the chevalier likes little girls is consul Nina's assumption, however, the person that can deny that is not present here.

Yuyurina opens a box with beautiful ornaments among the ones that are pilled up on top of the desk. There is a picture of the other party drawn,

surrounded by the golden picture frame that seems to be made by a master craftsman. The drawings are all of young maidens. When they scan at other letters, the other parties are all of 12-14 years old girls. They're a bit too young for marriage, but it's normal for noble engagements to be that way.

The problem is the other parties pedigrees.

"Earl's daughter? Just what and how did such marriage proposal come to be?!"

Normally, the one that proposes to a honorary noble is the daughter of a wealthy merchant, or of an influential townspeople, or of the same honorary noble, that's the normal. Starting with the proposal from someone that greatly surpasses the honorary chevalier himself, proposals from the daughter of higher-ranked nobles, and baronet turn up. There is no proposals that come from the daughters of high-ranking nobles that are higher than earl particularly.

Moreover, letters of marriage proposals for the chevalier arrive one after another after this day.

Eventually, there are three daughters of earls, around 30 daughters of nobles that are higher than baronet, and more than 100 daughters of chevalier, honorary noble, and wealthy merchants.

And then, the extreme one--

"Marquis' daughter?!"

Furthermore, there's even the handwriting of the marquis that says he doesn't mind if the person himself declines. It's not normal for a marriage proposal in itself, but it's really not like that marquis with his high pride. The marquis that she knows should be someone who is more high-handed. It's as if he has his weakness grasped.

"Good grief, even if we want to refuse or forward the marriage proposals, the

talk can't continue if we can't contact the person himself. As for the letters of excuse that Yuyurina has written, let's offset it from our debt to that man."

She was probably not serious, but the sourness on her stomach seemed like it subsided when she muttered so.

The letters that have arrived afterwards are not about marriage proposals, but applications for learning etiquette through apprenticeship. It's not rare for noble daughters to become lady attendants for their training, but it's unthinkable for noble daughters of the duchy capital to come to such backwater noble place like this.

"They intend to bury the moat from outside huh. Quite the tactic."

Moreover, there is also a request to have a joint development for making orchards in the suburb of Muno city that's hard to refuse. Apparently it seems to be an unique fruit that's immune to harmful insects and animals, and has become popular in the duchy capital. It looks somewhat suspicious, but since the other party will cover the specialists and seedlings costs for it, it's a bit wasteful to decline it.

"Kuh, Karina-sama. You have a lot of powerful rivals."

Consul Nina unintentionally muttered so. However, even she couldn't imagine that the next head miko who's also the former grand daughter of the duke had fallen in love with the chevalier in question.

The story about how consul Nina snaps from the yells of lady Karina's battle training, and goes to thoroughly lectures her is for a bit later.

SS: The Baron's Treasure

"Mou, father. Are you looking at that autograph paper again?"
"Oh, Soruna."

Lady Soruna looks slightly amazed at his father Baron who's gazing at the autograph paper in his private room alone like usual.
This autograph paper is something that his retainer has sent from Duke Oyugock capital. It's drawn with big characters which they've never seen before.

"Look at this powerful handwriting. Doesn't it look like it's shouldering the world. And also, these ancient characters that are overflowing with dynamism!　Unfortunately, it's too hard too read, but it must be words with a significant meaning."

Her smile that overflows from seeing her father nodding by himself while looking very satisfied only comes out once during the first time it's happened. Soruna, the daughter, didn't think that he would gaze upon it every night for one month straight that continues even now.

That is the autograph of the savior of the world, the hero of Saga empire, Masaki. She doesn't know just what kind of method chevalier Pendragon did to obtain this.

The autograph paper is written with ancient characters that no one can read, that is.

『To Baron Muno-san

YES! Lolita, NO! Touch

Hero Hayato Masaki』

It's probably fortunate for them to be unable to read the ancient language.

Intermission: Sera's Misfortune

"I'm home."
"Ara, Sera-sama. Have you finished your business with Duke-sama?"
"Yes, I was only confirming the attendant's schedule."

A female temple staff greeted me when I was at the side entrance to the temple staff room. The woman always serves as the guard during food distributions.

I was just at the duchy castle, as the esteemed grandfather had called me. The kingdom conference next spring will be attended by grandfather and Tisrad-oniisama, not father. It's been decided that I'm going to be his medic for when his physical condition deteriorates.

Even though the royal capital is quite far, it's only going to take a few days to go there with the airship.

Moreover, Satou-san should be attending the kingdom conference. I look forward to meet him after a long time.

That voices in my mind shouldn't have been heard, but.

"Right right, Sera-sama. I saw sir Pendragon just a while ago."
"Eh?! W, where is he?"

I raised my voice involuntarily from her remark, which made eyes to gather here. If it's the head miko-sama, she would have forgiven me, but chief miko-sama and the head priest are going to scold me for it.

I put my hands on my mouth, and confirm to her in low voice.
Since he was going to the north in a carriage, he must have been going to viscount Shimen's mansion. I decided to ask the waiting coachman who had escorted me to take me to the viscount's mansion.

"Please wait, I think the he's going to visit here...."

I heard such voice from behind, but since I'm not going to have any work until afternoon today, there shouldn't be any particular problem.

◇

I apologized for my sudden visit and requested for a meeting with viscount Shimen Hosaris, but it wasn't possible since he was readying to go to the royal capital. He's busy like usual.

Since I can't go back just like that, I'm going to visit the annex where Toruma-ojisama resides. He's said that it's okay for me to visit anytime, and I've asked the maid to pre-announce my visit, so it shouldn't be inconvenient for his family.

"Heya, Sera. It's rare for you to visit us."
"Excuse me for the long silence. Toruma-ojisama."

Oh? I wonder why, his face is looking sad that doesn't suit the cheerful toruma-oji.

"Sera, won't you call me Toruma-niichan like you did in the old days?"
"Ara, Oji-sama. Isn't it rude to call a married man, who has already had a baby, Onii-chan. What's wrong? Toruma-ojisama."
"Kukuku, Se, Sera-sama, please excuse him for that."

My talk partner has changed to his wife, Hayuna-sama, from Toruma-sama who's begun to look like he's crying while clinging to oba-sama.
<TLN: Oji-sama= uncle, oba-sama=aunt.>

I'd like to ask about Satou-san quick, but it's rude for me to start asking during the talk, I need some kind of topic, topic.... That's right! There's that talk choice!

"I've heard from grandfather just now that oji-sama will be granted baronet title during the spring conference. Congratulations!"
"Thank you. It's a honorary baronet, so Mayuna won't be able to succeed me though."

That reminds me, where is Mayuna-chan I wonder? I've not heard crying voice since a while ago.

"Ah, Mayuna is sleeping. Thanks to the toy that sir Pendragon had brought, she was in good mood from the beginning when she was awake until she slept after getting tired from laughing. She's not being handful, it's nice."

Yes, I've been waiting for that name to come up.

"Has sir Pendragon come here? I believe he's not going to go back to the duchy capital for a while..."
"He said that he came here alone from a trade port for a business at the scroll workshop."
"Satou-san had gone to the duke castle. Apparently, he was looking for red pickles, so he was going to ask the chef-san at the castle about it."

Chefs at the castle! Then, we've passed with each other haven't we.
I was able to quickly leave since Hayuna-sama was smoothly leading the talk for it. As expected of Toruma-ojisama for trying to stop it dead at its track.

◇

"I, if it isn't, Sera-sama. What would be your business in this place where lower-class people work?"

A lot of people are working busily in the castle's kitchen that I've visited for the first time. The maid who had guided me called the person in charge of this kitchen, but Satou-san doesn't seem to be here.

"Ah, Chevalier-sama should be going ta' the downtown after he heard about the pickles there."

This time it's the downtown! Mou, Satou-san is mean.

In the end, I wasn't able to meet Satou-san even though I went to the downtown. I couldn't concentrate during the practice that day, and got scolded many times by the head miko-sama.

◇

"Sera, you see."
"Sera, masita was here."
"Hey! You guys, call Sera-sama with Miko-sama or Sera-sama."

Little sea lion children started talking to me when I was chatting with the wives after the food distribution was over. The official of goddess Forina who was there scolded the children for not using honorifics to call me. I think there's no need to scold over such minor things toward such little children.

"What is masita?"

I bend my knee, and match my line of sight with the children's. I'm imitating Satou-san. It seems that it's easier to talk with the children if I do this. I feel that the distance between me and the children at the orphanage on consolation visit has decreased after I started doing this.

"Umm, ummm."
"Masita is, Nana's masita."

The Nana that I knows is Satou-san's attendant. Come to thinke of it, didn't Nana-san call Satou-san with *master*? Moreover, I remember that Nana-san often carried these children on her arms.

"Have you perhaps seen Satou-san?"
"Satou?"
"What I saw was Nana's masita."

It's not hitting the point well, but I'm going to follow the children for the chance. The official of goddess Forina didn't look too happy, but I made the official permitted it by having some guards follow me.

The children lead me by hand to the street that's left with very few people after the morning market is over.

"Sera, masita, was here."
"Hey, masita is?"

The children point to an elderly woman who's tidying up goods that look like pickles.

"Miko-sama, what are these children doing?"

I apologize to the perplexed oba-san, and ask about Satou-san.

"A 15 years old refreshing-looking black haired calm man, wearing refined looking robe who is also a young noble? Is he miko-sama's lover?"
"I, it's not like that! Satou-san is my friend."
"Right isn't it, you do have to value your friend."

I can't stand the encouraging very tepid gaze from the oba-san.

"Oba-chan, feed me something, I overslept too much and couldn't join the food distribution."
"You've worked every night right, buy something yourself."
"I don't even have one copper coin since I send them all as remittance for my hometown. The Kuhanou pickles I got from Sac-chan aren't satisfying to munch after all~"

A woman on her late 20s, with a slightly vulgar clothes, cut herself between

Oba-san and my talk. I wonder if men are attracted to these kind of voluptuous person?

"U, umm."
"There are many young men with black hair. Oh right, the nii-san that had saved Futsuna the other day was also a black hair."
"Hmm? The one Sac-chan's talked about? Sac-chan said that he had some great techniques even though he was young. Thanks to that, she had lack of sleep."
"What are you saying in front of Miko-sama. Here, I'll give you an onigiri, bear with that."
"Yay, I love you oba-chan."

I excuse myself since I'm in the middle of a work.

"Masita, not here?"
"Satou-san doesn't seem to be here."
"Ara? The one that Miko-sama looking is called Satou? Sac-chan said that he left the duchy capital with the very first ship in the morning."

N, no way... that's cruel, Satou-san. Won't it hurt you to show up for a bit. I thanked the woman who had informed me, and went back totteringly to the temple.

But, I wonder what kind of relationship they have?

◇

It's 10 days afterward when I meet Satou-san.

『Today, light hill, your chevalier.』

I was given such letter during food distribution. I couldn't see the other party's face, but is this really from Satou-san?

Light hill is a hill at the edge of the downtown with beautiful reflection of the stars on the great river, it's famous for being a place for trysts between lovers.

I can't go to such place as a miko myself.... But, it's fine if I go just to meet him right?

◇

"A star seems to have fallen into the great river."

The priest has asked the guards to go with me.
However, the one that waits in the hill is not Satou-san.

"Fuhn? As expected of the princess of the archduke to bring along guards during her secret date~"

When the boy with white hair pulls out his sword, the guards quickly make a wall in front of me. The grandfather's private soldiers that have guarded me from a distant protect me. Due to my kidnapping incident during the attack on the duchy capital back then, they've been protecting me from this kind of ruffians constantly.

"Ahaha, with such few number of small fries, you can't stop me you know~?"
"I've been in the imperial guard since my youth days. You brat won't be able to match me."

Silver flashes glitters, I can hear the sound of swords clashing.

Very slightly after that, the guards have all fallen to the ground. The dumbfounded guards are going to run away while taking me, but the white-haired boy cuts them in a blink of an eye.

"I need to take you a hostage to lure out someone. I will pluck off your feet

and hands if you resist, so be obedient okay~?"

He slowly comes to me while shouldering his bloodstained sword. He moves like a weasel who's torturing prey.

"What are you doing on someone's garden?"

Satou-san?

I wonder why, I mistook him for Satou-san for an instant even though that person's voice and height were different. That person who's wearing black clothes is about three fists taller than Satou-san, and his voice is different above all.

He's holding a beautiful sword that scatters blue light in the middle of the night, while overwhelming the white haired boy.

Is that sword a holy sword?

But, his physique is too different than hero-sama. Is he Nanashi-sama who has saved the duchy capital from crisis together with hero-sama?

After some exchange of blows, the white haired boy took some distances away. He's probably going to run. I thought that but--

"O Long Horn, feed on my hatred for the violent power!"

He was going to push the long horn that he had taken from his bosom to his own forehead, but a person with purple hair confiscated that away. Where did this purple haired person come out from?

"Give it back."

The white hair attacks the purple hair, but the purple hair evades the attack casually, and he knocks the white hair down with his fist like he's scolding a little child. The people who have guarded me aren't weak soldiers. To easily

overpower the one who has slaughtered those guards like this, he must not be an ordinary person.

"What's wrong Nanashi. Weren't you going to just look from the back?"
『This guy took out something dangerous. I had to disempower him before he could use it.』

This purple haired person seems to be called Nanashi. Why does he has such stuffy voice I wonder? Nanashi-sama produced a rope out of nowhere which moved by itself to capture the boy.

With a wave of Nanashi-sama's hand, the wounds on the dying soldiers disappear.

Is that chantless magic?

『Well then, Miko Sera. I will excuse myself. Please send my regard to head miko-sama. The duchy capital sentries are coming here soon, but please don't approach that white hair."

So he said, and the two disappear like they've been swallowed by the darkness. Thanks to this miraculous encounter, it seems my life is saved. The uninjured soldiers who have been healed by Nanashi-sama, gets up and captures the white haired boy. I pray for the soldiers who have died protecting me while looking at that scene with a sidelong glance.

However, I wonder why does Nanashi-sama know my name?

SS: Lulu's Pests Extermination

<Author's Note: This is an SS with Liza's POV, not Satou.>

"Ufufu, you're bad you know? Since you've put your hands on other people's thing..."

What should I do, Lulu seems strange.

"Now, be obediently exterminated."

When I look at Lulu who's holding a kitchen knife on her hand while having a dark smile, I feel a slight cold on my back.

"Ara ara, are you scared? Pulling your hands and feet back like that. Are you trying to hide it by doing that?"

I'm at a loss as to whether call Lulu who's speaking like she's driving it into the corner, but since she'll be still speaking when master come soon, let's stop her now.

"Now, resign yourself--"
"Lulu."

When I called her, Lulu very quickly turned her body around. Looking at the kitchen knife being hold in both hands like she's going to thrust it sure is scary.

"D, did you see?"
"No, I didn't. Rather than that, master is coming, so you should end your little drama, and quickly finish catching the vegetable bugs."
"P, please Liza-san, about this, to master--"

Lulu who's drawing near in a panic looks cute, but since she's still holding the kitchen knife, I lightly take it off. Since it's dangerous.

I promise the nondisclosure, "I swear that I did not seen anything" to Lulu. As a thank for keeping it a secret, Lulu is going to give me the thick slice of the steak today. I did not have such intention, but the meat has no sin. I will gladly accept it.

"What's wrong Liza? You look happy about something."
"No, it is nothing."

This is a secret between girls after all, so I'm keeping it a secret from master.

SS: Doctor Pochi

"It's terrible nanodesu! It's terrible if it keeps being left alone nanodesu."
"Terrible~?"

Pochi who's wearing a female doctor fashion is accompanied by Arisa and Tama who are wearing mini skirt nurse uniforms. Mia is on an outing with Aialize.
Playing doctor huh, it's really like Arisa. At first Arisa was going to be the doctor, but since it seemed like she would sexually harass me if she took the stethoscope, it had been changed to Pochi.

"Eh~ that's troubling."
"Yes, it's troubling nodesu."

Pochi folds her arms and takes an exaggerated 'it's troubling' pose.
The flow of the conversation is like the dog policeman nursery rhyme. Arisa makes fun of her shouting, "Woofwoof woowoo~f", but it seems Pochi and and also Tama have gotten used to her eccentric behavior as they completely ignore her. Arisa, how pitiful.

Let's play along with it for a bit.

"What's the terrible thing?"
"It's the Fuji sickness nanodesu! They're having shortage of Arisanium and Tamarin nodesu."

Just what are Arisanium and Tamarin? Is it something like musukonium?
<TLN: lit. Son-nium, seems to be Nyaruko reference.>

I see so there is no lack of Pochinium huh. I see.

Then!

"Then, let's charge it quickly."

I say so, then carry both Arisa and Tama on my hand, and rub their cheeks. Since Arisa's face has collapsed, I continue to only rub Tama's face.

Pochi spreads her arms with a face full of expectation, but I leave her be. Huh? Like so she looks puzzled.

"Master, Pochi also wants to be rubbed nodesu."
"However, the ones that are lacking are only Arisanium and Tamarin right."

I shake my head, "Unfortunately", to Pochi. She's flailing her short arms, and wander her eyes around seeking for help. Nana just waves her head to the side, Liza remains silent. Lulu is only laughing lightly.
I feel sorry for her if I keep leaving her alone, so let's put out some help.

"Don't tell me that Pochinium is also lacking?"
"Yes nanodesu! It's really lacking nodesu!"

Pochi is diving from the chair, so I receive her. Arisa, who's been hit by Pochi's knee, faints while holding her back of head in agony. A~ah. Since Arisa hasn't done anything wrong this time, I heal her with magic healing.

It has been decided that Lulunium, Lizanium, and Nananium are also lacking, so I charge them with the skinship. It seems that I'm biased with charge amount of Nananium, so the alliance of power has submitted their objection.

The check is a bit too harsh me think.

SS: Fishing

"What are you making nodesu?"
"Insect~?"

Pochi and Tama peek from my sides while I'm making a tool.

"This is called a fly."
"Hairy caterpillar~?"
"It's not an insect nodesu?"
"It's an artificial bait that pretends to be an insect to catch fish."

They probably don't really understand, but Pochi and Tama fold their arms while nodding, "I see~", "Nanodesu."

Since it's right when I've just completed it, I take the two along to a watering hole nearby.
Watering holes in this world have a lot of fish, and it's not limited to this Boruenan forest. Only the ones in baron Muno territory don't have the fish.

It's one thing with the rod guides, but making the reel is too troublesome, so there's only one set of fishing tackle. I wave the fly on the end of the rod and powerfully cast it to the intended place.

It seems that there are a lot of fish brimming with curiosity, the fly is bitten the moment it lands on the water.

"Iregui~?"
"Am, amaziingnodesu! It's already been bitten nodesu. Fly is an expert nanodesu."
<TLN: Iregui: fish biting at every cast.>

Tama is happy nonchalantly, in contrast with Pochi who's too excited, she's flailing her arms around while fumbling her words.

This time I adjust the fishing line length to be at normal length, and try to

land the fly on the water. After leaving it for a bit, another fish with the same big mouth that look like the trout earlier bites. Still, to catch 50 cms fish like this so easily, there's a limit to iregui too.

After making Pochi and Tama wait for only three minutes, I give them two impromptu fishing rods with artificial baits.

"Now, try it."
"Full speed ahead~?"
"I'll do my best nodesu!"

While having meager happenings like Pochi getting her fishing rod caught on a needle tree, or Tama getting dragged into the pond by the too-big-of-a fish that she's fished, we end up catching more than 100 fish until the evening. Some fish that can't fit the fish-tank have ran away, yet it's still overflowing with fish.

"Fish festival~?"
"Are having fish today nanodesu?"
"We need to have the mud removed from the fish. I'm sorry but, today we're having whale meat like usual."

It's delicious indeed, but it gets a bit tiring after all.

"There is no problem nodesu! I like whale meat as much as Theodore nanodesu!"
"Karaage~? Cutlets?"

We keep having fried food, and we've just had steak yesterday. I'd like to have some vegetables, so I guess another kind of dish will be nice.

"Right then, since it's not really a good match as hamburg steak, why don't we have sukiyaki?"
"Hamburg-sensei is almighty nanodesu!"
"Sukiyaki suki~"
<TLN: I love sukiyaki.>

"Of course, I love the great god sukiyaki too nanodesu."

Thus, the next dinner will be with sukiyaki.

I made the fish from today into boiled fish several days later. Pochi almost cried since there were many small bones, but since Lulu patiently lectured her the way to take the small bones away, she ate it all without leaving anything behind.

Now then, what should we do tomorrow?